



Meet the Sprockers!
Springers and Cocker
– a lively combination



How many words does your dog know?
Wonder dog Chaser knows 1,000!

Make & bake
Clever, crafty Christmas ideas



Big strides for assistance dogs
Great Dane is a huge help for Tourette's sufferer
And...
Victoria Stilwell closes down a US puppy farm

A nose for news and a heart of gold

Dog Today

More pages ♥ more heart!



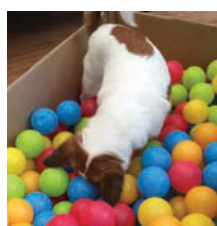
Recent baby death blamed on dog's breed
Do these witch-hunts make children any safer?



Saying thank you to Dogs Trust's model CEO
Clarissa's 40 years taking the lead



Inside!
42 rescue dogs are looking for a home



Have a ball!
Great games to play at home with your dog!



Look into my eyes...

What do I want for Xmas?
Ask Sarah Whitehead & Richard Allport inside...

Can dogs spread Ebola?

Two pet dogs got caught up in the panic



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FUEL EXTRAORDINARY

History does have rather a habit of repeating itself, sadly. Politicians have been rubbish at dealing with dog issues for centuries



Beverley Cuddy is *Dogs Today's* Editor and publisher. She shares her life with Tess, a gorgeous rescued English Springer from Dogs Trust, Oscar, a very handsome Bearded Collie and new pack member, Betty, a Springer-Beardie cross puppy from Many Tears. The dogs are all firm friends and partners in crime.

Most people know that Dogs Trust was once called the National Canine Defence League, but beyond that, I was rather sketchy on the charity's early history until I did a spot of background reading before interviewing the retiring chief executive this month.

A handful of dog lovers formed the Defence League in 1890 – and the anti-dog politicians certainly found them to be very much more than a handful!

It does sound a very long time ago, but the struggles they faced back then are surprisingly similar to those of today.

In 1898 Mr Long, the Minister of Agriculture, introduced a bill that attempted to force all dog owners to muzzle their dogs in public and gave the police the right to destroy on sight any stray dogs they felt posed a risk.

Long was his name, but the NCDL made quite sure that his political career was very short indeed.

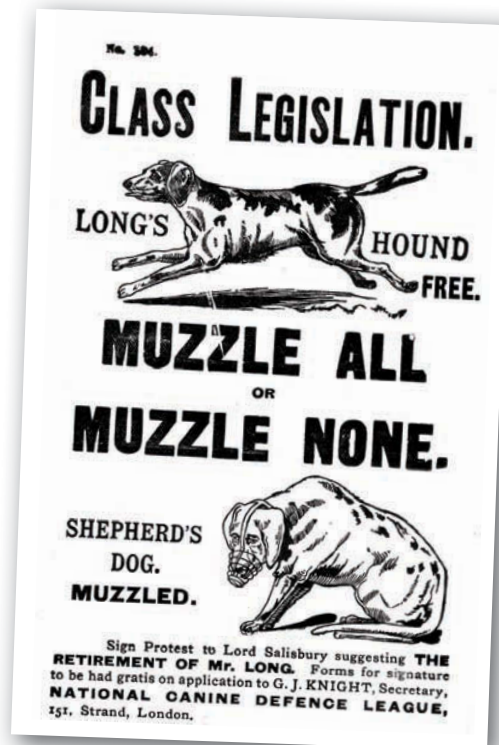
They branded it his 'muzzle and slaughter' programme and sent out half a million leaflets and posters putting across the dog's perspective. They employed men to wear sandwich boards and parade outside the Houses of Parliament, and they engaged in 3D graffiti by nailing muzzles and copies of the bill on walls throughout the capital.

They collected an astonishing 100,000 signatures on a petition to ban the bill and presented it to Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, who fairly promptly sacked him.

This was probably the birth of political lobbying as well as Britain's top dog charity.

In the weeks before we went to press, all sorts of talking heads were calling for dogs to be muzzled and we even had a coroner adding fuel to the idea that some breeds are just born bad.

At the inquest into Molly-Mae Wotherspoon's death the coroner said, "I understand the family owned



the American Pit Bull Terrier who attacked Molly-Mae. The family in this case have paid the ultimate price for owning such a dog – the death of their six-month-old baby."

Wouldn't it have been so much better had the coroner pointed out that babies and dogs should be kept apart – not just those that the tape measure brands as dangerous?

The coroner, Anne Pember, reminded the public that the Dangerous Dogs Act was in place for a reason.

But sadly, as Molly-Mae's death proves, the vilification of an entire breed and the attempted genocide of that type of dog has been a complete failure. We now have many more than ever before and tragic deaths like Molly-Mae's.

When a baby was killed by a German Shepherd in France, the adult in charge was arrested for not adequately supervising the baby. In the UK we simply don't seem to have moved on from 1890 – the knee jerk is still the politician's favourite and most frequent exercise.

Our friend the dog has never needed a defence league more; perhaps it's time to get those sandwich boards out again? ★

Stop Press: Did you see us all on Sky News gadget show *Swipe* talking about the best doggie tech? Oscar, Tess and Betty really enjoyed being TV stars and are considering getting their own agent.



Words:
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The Archaeologist

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Dogs Today

The ethical pet magazine for people who really care about dogs



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On the cover:

Kobi is an Australian Labradoodle and is only 10 weeks old in this photo. He is the Kings' ninth dog and was bred by Cream of British Australian Labradoodles. Rob King is one of our greatest dog photographers, so Kobi is likely to be very well documented.

Happy birthday to co-owner Caroline - this magazine comes out on a significant birthday for her! The Kings run the Doodlemania

group - a place where all doodle owners are welcome.

www.doodlemania.co.uk

www.facebook.com/groups/doodlemania

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Into the unknown

The concern about the spread of Ebola has been the subject of news headlines worldwide. Ebola has directly affected more than 9,000 people, but the case that stirred one of the biggest responses is that of Excalibur, the dog that was sadly put down after its owner contracted the disease...

Ebola reached Spain when nurse Teresa Romero Ramos was diagnosed with the disease after treating an infected patient from Sierra Leone.

While in hospital, Ms Romero Ramos received the news that a court order had been issued for her mixed breed dog, Excalibur, to be put down. With all the uncertainty surrounding how the disease can be spread, the authorities needed to minimise the risk of Excalibur passing it on.

The public response to this news was astounding, as people took to social media to show their support and protest against the decision to put Excalibur down. Around 40 determined protesters and animal rights activists gathered outside Teresa Romero Ramos's apartment to prevent Excalibur from being removed.

The united front and support from dog lovers across the world served to assure Teresa and her husband that they were not facing their loss alone.

However, Excalibur's fate had already been decided, and Madrid's regional government later announced that he had been euthanased. Since this, Ms Romero Ramos has recovered from the disease and must return to her home without her dog.

Guesswork

Only one study has been carried out into whether dogs can spread the disease to humans, and this was back in 2005. This study by the Centres of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) looked at 300 dogs affected in the outbreak in Gabon in 2001 and 2002, and determined that dogs can be infected by Ebola but they show no symptoms. However, no straightforward diagnostic

test exists to show if dogs are contagious.

Days after Excalibur had been put to sleep, authorities in Dallas had a similar decision to make when Nina Pham, the owner of a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel named Bentley, contracted the disease in America.

Fortunately, County Judge Clay Jenkins sensibly agreed that Bentley would not be put down, and instead would be taken into quarantine.

Again, due to the lack of knowledge surrounding Ebola, we do not know how long the disease takes to develop in dogs, if at all, and how long quarantine should be. Ebola is spread between humans who display symptoms through the transfer of bodily fluids. As mammals, dogs can infect other mammals, but because they are not symptomatic, it is unclear whether humans can catch it from them. >>>

The British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) has stated:

"While there is no evidence that domestic animals have been implicated in the spread of the disease, it would be a sensible precaution to take great care when handling dogs, or other animals, known to have been in contact with an infected person."

The Animal Health Trust supports this notion.



There is no protocol for how long quarantine should be and how long the disease takes to spread, but Bentley was quarantined for 21 days, which is the maximum incubation period for the virus in humans.

No going back

A spokesperson from Peta (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) has said, "Peta was sad to hear that despite a lack of any evidence that dogs can transmit Ebola, Excalibur, a dearly loved dog, was destroyed. Efforts could and should have been made to quarantine him, as authorities did with Bentley, the one-year-old pooch who lived with an Ebola-infected nurse in Dallas, who was given comfortable bedding, toys and plenty of room to run around at a decommissioned US naval base.

"The last thing that anyone infected with Ebola needs is to learn that a family member

has been put down without any effort made to save his or her life. We appeal for common sense and mercy to prevail if and when such cases arise in the future."

Unlike in Spain, where the unanswered questions surrounding the disease were enough to warrant Excalibur being put down, the US has taken into account the distress that Bentley's euthanasia would cause for Nina Pham, as well as the opportunity to learn more about the disease from monitoring Bentley in quarantine.

Scott Wease, an animal disease control expert and chief of infection control at the University of Guelph Ontario Veterinary College Health Sciences Centre, has stated, "There is limited concern about dogs playing a role in the natural transmission of the Ebola virus in areas where the virus is endemic.

"The likelihood of a dog being

exposed to Ebola virus outside of endemic regions in Africa is very unlikely; this would require contact with bodily secretions of a human with symptoms of Ebola virus infection."

Knowing this, along with the fact that Bentley was tested negative for the virus during his quarantine, makes the loss of Excalibur's life especially tragic.

Looking ahead

When asked about what would happen in the unlikely event of an Ebola outbreak in the UK, a spokesperson from Defra commented, "We take disease control very seriously, and any case would be carefully considered by Public Health England and the Department of Health, working closely with Defra."

With further research, pets and family members like Excalibur will not need to pay the ultimate price for our lack of knowledge. ★

Words:
Hannah Wynne
Illustrations:
Kevin Brockbank




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The dog who knows 1,000 words

How many words does your dog know? Walkies, fetch, sit, down, bed, ball, car... You'll tot up a dozen fairly easily with a well-trained dog. But Chaser, a Border Collie from South Carolina, knows an incredible 1,022 words – and counting!



Jasper, an Irish Setter



With a retired psychology professor as Chaser's owner, the language 'experiment' has all been scientifically documented and verified, and now is the subject of a fascinating book, *Chaser – Unlocking the Genius of the Dog Who Knows 1,000 Words*.

John Pilley has always been a dog lover, and the family has had many faithful friends over the years. But when a long-overdue retirement coincided with the Pilley home being dogless for the first time in 47 years, John's wife, Sally, took the lead and announced on Christmas Day 2003 that she was getting her husband a Border Collie from a breeder he had long admired. John would have to wait until spring, as the puppy wasn't actually born yet, but he was delighted – and so began a new phase in his life.

With a super-smart Border Collie pup receiving his undivided attention, John became fascinated with her learning – his mind buzzing with curiosity about Chaser's potential to learn the meaning of words.

He taught her the name of each of her toys, and the verbs for actions she produced as part of her natural repertoire (shake it, drink, bark).

Previous studies have shown that dogs generally know about a dozen words – mostly verbs, such as sit and

stay. However, language-trained animals – specially taught dogs, sea lions, parrots, apes and dolphins – all have vocabulary sizes of between 100 and 500, regardless of species.

John wanted to test this limit and also to see if Chaser could make the same learning leap that toddlers make in understanding not only verbs and proper nouns but also common nouns and modifiers.

Chaser was no laboratory animal – first and foremost, she was (and still is) a much-loved family dog. She does all the usual doggie things in life, but her spare time is spent playing with the owner she adores.

Dream team

"I see Chaser as a co-investigator and research assistant rather than as an experimental subject," John explains. "Just as she's a part of our family, she's the other half of my research team."

And what a team it is! Chaser not only doubled the 500-word limit for animal learning, she has also mastered far more than verbs and nouns.

John explains, "Chaser understands so many actions, I can't list them all, and what is impressive is that she can combine them with her nouns (fetch ball, nose ball, take ball, paw ball, roll ball, etc). She also understands adverbs, such as faster, slower, bigger, smaller, and categories of objects, like trees, sticks, balls, Frisbees, and cars."

Chaser's achievements have seen her share the front cover of the *National Examiner* with Brad Pitt and Charlie Sheen. She's appeared on top talk shows and news programmes, as well as appearing in respected science journals.

Now aged 10, she's showing no signs of slowing up. Her language is being refined and she's learning to mimic, too. John explains, "We are investigating her abilities for modelling human behaviour: imitation learning. I can ask her to watch me as I execute a series of behaviours, such as picking up a specific toy and depositing it on another table. Then I give her the cue, 'Now you do it.' She has once again made the leap to understanding, 'Oh yes, he wants me to do what he just did.' Now we are combining auditory and visual cues, which creates an extremely fast learning curve for Chaser. It's very exciting." >>>



Brainiac breed

A Border Collie's ability to learn is legendary, and when this is combined with an incredible work ethic and limitless energy, you can see why the breed is the perfect pupil for a committed trainer.

John explains his fascination with collies and why the breed is an ideal candidate for language research.

"They are working dogs, bred for centuries to listen to the farmer; if they did not listen to the farmer, they weren't bred from. So, genetically, their DNA has been structured to have an affinity for human language."

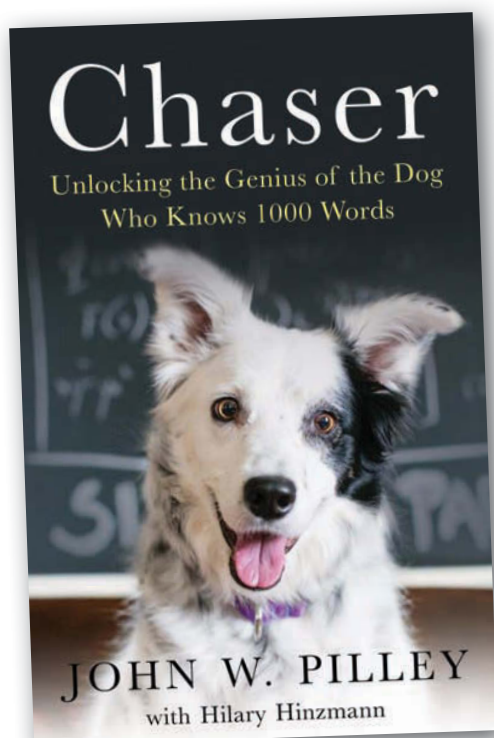
"In addition, Border Collies are highly energised and continue to behave as puppies even in their later years."

"Their herding instinct also demonstrates their strong ability to maintain an intense focus upon the task they are given. As a breed, they have an innate need to be given tasks and to work with humans."

Could John have achieved the same success with any other breed? Not quite, he says.

"Because Border Collies have been bred to keep their eye on their sheep and give their ear to the farmer, they have an edge when it comes to learning words. However, we do believe that dog owners, if they follow the methods described in our book, will also be successful in teaching their dogs the names of objects."

So, what are you waiting for? Turn to page 16 for instructions on widening your dog's vocabulary...





Try it at home!

You will need:

- ★ Patience
- ★ Time to play with your pup
- ★ Basic obedience commands
- ★ A gentle voice
- ★ Positive reinforcement
- ★ Dog-friendly toys

Good foundations

Before you try to teach your dog or puppy the names of objects, it is always best to start with the simple obedience commands, such as lie down, stand, stay and sit.

I can't emphasise enough the importance of doing this with positive reinforcement, so that you develop a loving and trusting relationship with your

dog. From the beginning of Chaser's learning of the basic obedience behaviours, I incorporated them into our play in order to enhance their value in her mind.

Use encouraging words with an excited tone to teach the obedience commands. Don't shy away from food treats in the beginning, but use them in the context of strokes, praise and play rewards. That will enable you to reduce the need for food treats over time and increase the extent to which your dog is eager to learn new things as part of interacting with you.

The quality of your relationship with your dog will ultimately determine the quality of your training and teaching and of your dog's learning. Teaching the basic obedience behaviours in this way lays a foundation of mutual respect,

and gives you a priceless opportunity to learn your dog's individual personality and how best to keep him or her motivated for learning.

Teaching nouns

The first step in teaching proper nouns, or the names of objects, is to begin very simply, one object at a time.

Start with your dog's favourite toy and play with that one object while giving it a name. What you are doing is associating the object with play, and therefore giving the object value to your dog. Once the object has value, the name of the object will take on value, too.

I did this with Chaser when she was just two months old, introducing her to 'blue', the name I gave to a blue racquetball. For three days we played with 'blue', while I constantly repeated the name. I would have Chaser fetch blue, catch blue, find blue...

When I asked her, "Where is blue?" it was the only toy on the floor, making it impossible for her to make a mistake. You want to eliminate any room for error that frustrates your dog or makes him or her feel bad.

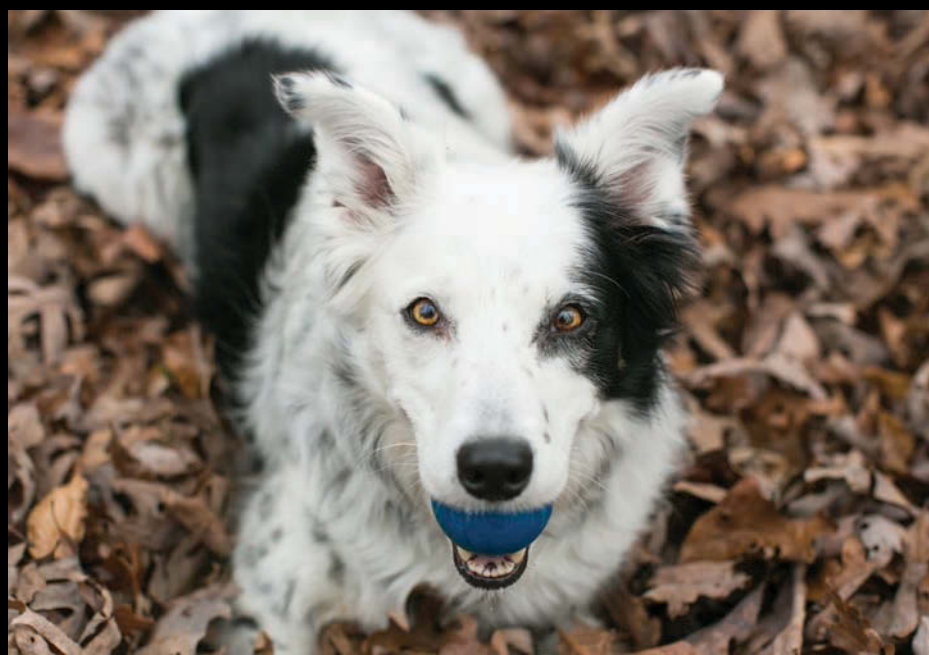
Once your dog can retrieve the toy from a hiding place or another room, you can introduce another toy by its name. ★

Q Is there a limit to a dog's learning?

A We don't know the definitive answer to that question. However, I'm happy to say that Chaser continues to learn with no boundaries in sight and this is possible because learning builds upon learning.

I do believe that Chaser's ability to understand language and use her communication skills has greatly improved the quality of her life. That being said, she has taught me infinitely more than I have taught her.

John Pilley



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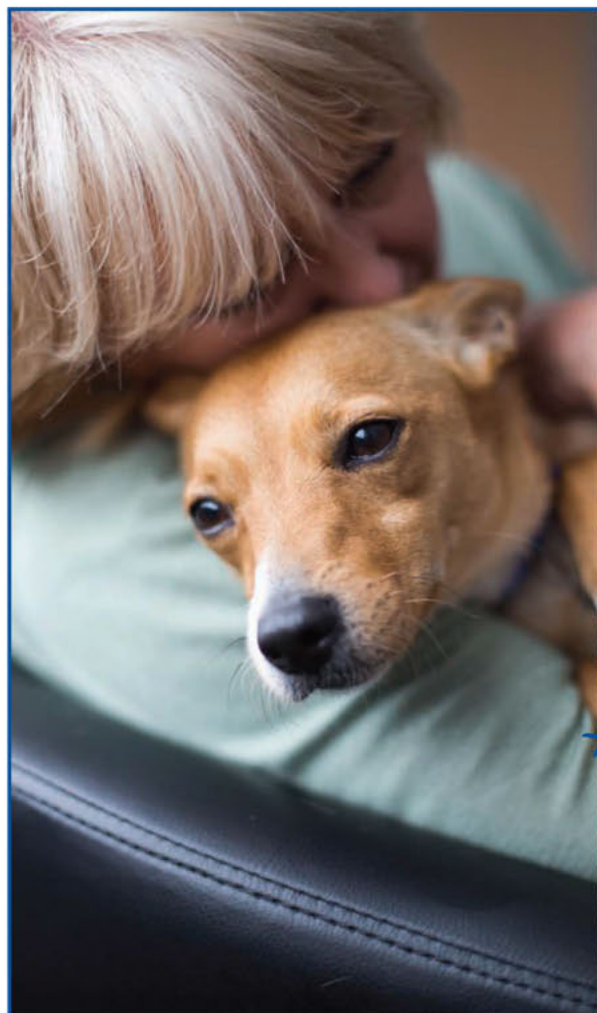

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Words:
Claire Horton-Bussey



Please note: ear cropping is still legal in Canada

Tackling tics: assistance dogs for Tourette's

Think 'assistance dog' and a guide dog, hearing dog or other service dog is likely to come to mind. There are now dogs for veterans affected with post-traumatic stress disorder, for children with autism, and for those who need a dog to alert them to an imminent seizure or other change to their health and well-being.

So perhaps we shouldn't have been quite so surprised when we heard of a new type of service dog – for those with Tourette's syndrome (TS).

When Jodi Laycock of Luseland, Saskatchewan, in Canada was diagnosed with Tourette's as a teenager, her understanding of the condition was minimal.

"'Yeah, right,' I thought. I don't shout profanities like I see on TV. So on I went to another neurologist. And another. And another. All of them came back with the same diagnosis. They explained to me that Tourette's does not always involve coprolalia.

"They also explained that there was no cure, and that it was something that I must learn to live with. The tics would change, coming and going, appearing and disappearing throughout my life. I would never be free of this condition that steps in and takes over my movements before I can blink, or do anything to stop it.

"How could I live a full life?"
"That's not living," I thought."

But live she did, marrying at 25 and having a son. But when the son grew up and left home,

and the husband's work often took him away from home, there were no longer reasons to leave the house and so Jodi didn't, becoming increasingly insular.

Her three Great Danes were more than happy to exercise in Jodi's extensive grounds, and the grocery store did home deliveries, so there was no need to face the outside world and risk its disapproving looks.

"Leaving the house became a rarity," Jodi explains. "My dogs certainly never laughed at my tics or asked me to stop doing them. They never once asked what was 'wrong with me'. I began to hide in this insulated world. But I knew it was wrong. No 44-year-old should spend their days avoiding other people, and depression set in."

Jodi began to wonder if a Dane could be trained to become a medical alert dog – identifying when she's about to tic and then leaning against her, to keep her and others safe from her involuntary arm movements.

Lucky loophole

Researching Canadian laws, it seemed unlikely. Therapy dogs and emotional support dogs are not given public access, unlike service dogs, who are trained and certified by Assistance Dog International (ADI). Unfortunately, ADI breeds only Labrador-Golden Retriever crosses, who wouldn't have the height or strength to support Jodi in the way a Great Dane would.

Luckily, Jodi then discovered that Saskatchewan is the exception, having its own legislation. Residents of this province can have any breed of service dog, providing it meets the training criteria set out by ADI.

And so came Sabbath, a Dane puppy from Ohio/Indiana breeder Pam Filson-Baxter. Sabbath joined Jodi's home in April and is being trained in a fashion similar to seizure alert and cancer detection dogs.

"He will be trained to recognise slight changes in my muscle tension and sense the change in dopamine levels, to alert me prior to me harming myself, or causing harm to things or those around me.

"His second task will be to move me from harm's way in those cases, or pin me to a wall or corner, so I cannot move until I am done.

I tend to have grand movements, such as arm flapping or throwing things to the ground. I smash the heel of my hand against my nose, causing self damage, and I will even pinch strangers in public."

Jodi and Sabbath have had fantastic support from The Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada, and Sabbath's training is progressing brilliantly. All being well, he looks set to qualify around the age of 18 months.

Fresh start

Jodi can't wait for her life to begin again, saying, "He will allow me the freedom to go out into my community more often without the worry that I may harm myself, or knock things over, or even assault someone by pinching them. My involuntary movements do not happen all the time, and the lack of knowing if and when they will occur in public is the main part that keeps me at home.

"With Sabbath, even if I do have odd movements or tics, people will see the dog and realise that there is a reason for it – not simply that I am being an oddball, which is a feeling so many with Tourette's have. It forces them to stay home more and more – until eventually, weeks can pass without leaving the house." ★

Badger and Bodger

Sabbath is Canada's first ever dog trained to alert and assist with Tourette's syndrome – and also the country's first Great Dane service dog. We've found a handful of other Tourette's dogs, such as Casey, a Golden Retriever in New York, who calms his teenage owner, Emily Jones, by sitting or lying on her, but we've not heard of any Tourette's assistance dogs in the UK. However, there could be a potential star closer to home...

Coincidentally, while I was researching this story, *Dogs Today's* former production manager, Jennie Routley (affectionately known as Badger), brought home new pup Bodger, a very smart working Cocker-collie cross. In the four weeks since, Jennie reports that she has barely ticced, saying, "I'm not sure if it's coincidence or the distraction of having her, but I've hardly had any tics since she's arrived."

And if Jennie does tic, Bodger has the best treatment.

"I used to take Valium if I got really 'ticcy' or anxious; now I can just cuddle Bodger."



Shock tactics

4

Electrifying new research into shock collars supports what we have suspected for a very long time...

If you want to waste a good 45 minutes on YouTube, have a look at people trying on shock collars. It's entertaining watching people (usually young, usually male, usually American) trying to 'bark' enough to set them off, or edging up to

perimeter fences, egged on by onlookers.

However, once the collar actually goes off, it quickly becomes unsettling viewing, as crossed eyes and rapidly tapping feet show just how painfully powerful they are. Hands swiftly intervene to



remove the metal prongs from necks, something that paws are unable to do.

Shock collars have been around for decades and, despite being implements of pain and fear, they have remained largely unregulated, and their potential effects woefully understudied.

Animal welfare is a devolved power in the UK, so when the Welsh Assembly decided to prohibit the use of shock collars in 2010, all we could do was hope that Westminster would follow suit. Unfortunately, progress has been very slow.

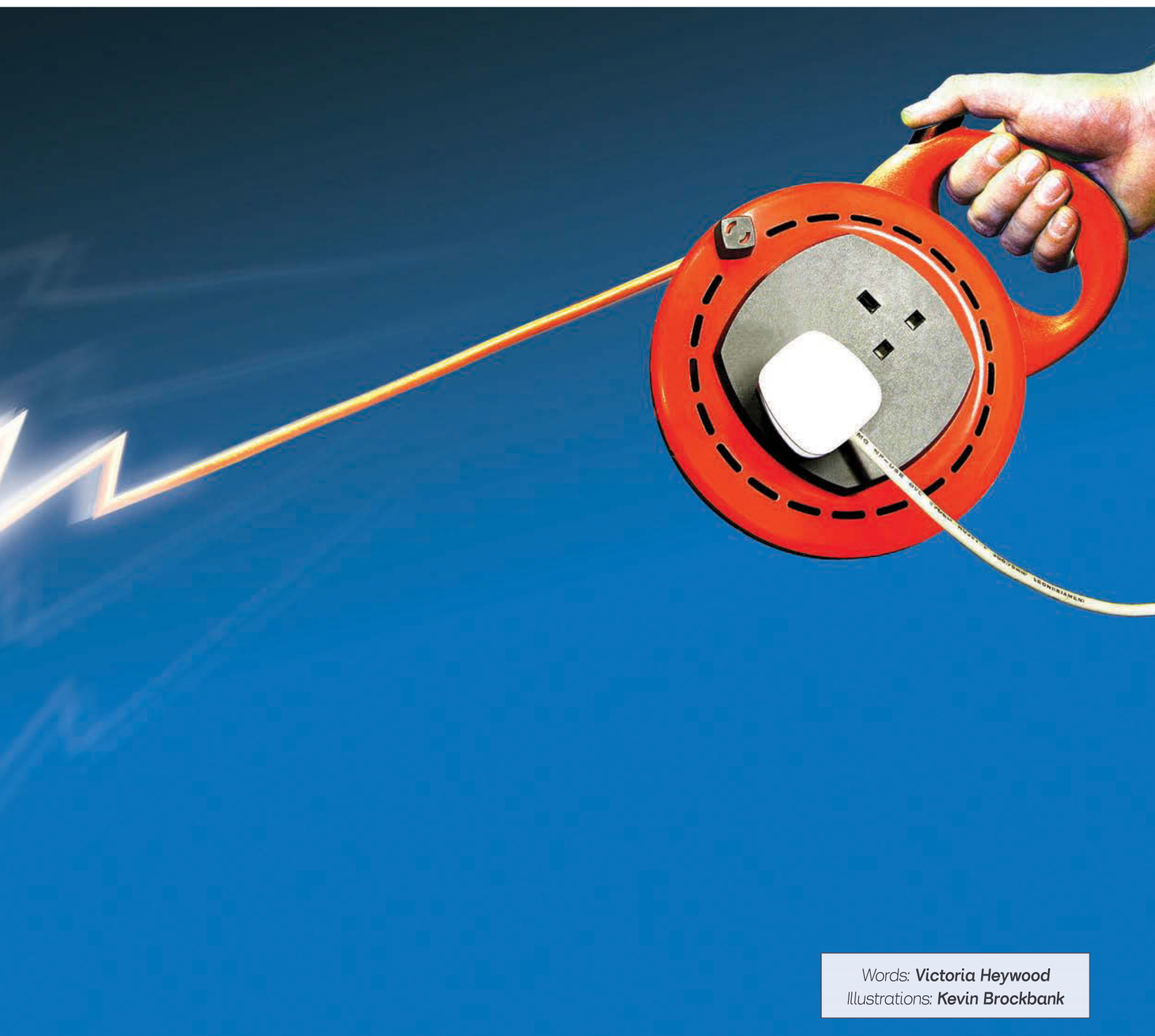
Use a shock collar on a dog

in Wales and you could receive a maximum sentence of six months in prison, or a fine of up to £20,000. This blanket ban has been enforced, too; a man from the Vale of Glamorgan was fined £2,000 plus costs in 2011, after his Border Collie was found straying, wearing a shock collar. The owner claimed the device was used to stop the dog escaping from his garden – clearly a great success.

Now new research may finally bring about some legislative changes in the rest of the UK. A recent study by the University of Lincoln sought to address the

welfare concerns that have hung around shock collars for years. It compared the responses of dogs trained with the devices to those trained without, and those trained by positive means, in a highly controlled, five-day trial. Shock collars were given the fairest possible assessment and were used by trained professionals.

“The study followed the Electronic Collar Manufacturers Association line, in terms of using low settings on the collars, assessing the dogs carefully beforehand, and the use of pre-warning cues so the electronic



Words: **Victoria Heywood**
Illustrations: **Kevin Brockbank**



These collars are not the quick fix that they are so often advertised as; the study found that training with shock collars “did not result in a substantially superior response” to training without.

The dogs in the study

63 dogs were involved, all referred by their owners for poor recall and associated problems, such as chasing and livestock worrying.

They were divided into three groups:

Group A

Trained with shock collars

Group B

Trained without shock collars but by the same trainers as Group A

Group C

Trained with positive methods, by trainers actively opposed to shock collars

shock was associated with the stimulus,” Jonathan Cooper, a researcher on the project, told *Dogs Today*. “This was seen as negative reinforcement, not punishment.”

Despite this, the results were alarming. The dogs trained with shock collars showed significantly more signs of stress, such as lip licking, yawning, less interaction with the environment and, perhaps most distressing to hear, more sudden movements away from the trainers.

And for what benefit? These collars are not the quick fix that they are so often advertised as; the study found that training with shock collars “did not result in a substantially superior response” to training without. Even for those who value obedience over basic welfare, shock collars aren’t the answer.

Unease

On the final day of the study, owners were asked to take control of their dogs’ training with the method they had been assigned. On the whole, owners were less confident about applying the shock collar training themselves, which is really rather worrying.

Using a shock collar incorrectly is very dangerous; other studies have reasoned that if a dog associates the pain with another

stimulus, such as another dog or a passing stranger, it could cause misplaced fear or even aggression. And yet there are hundreds of thousands of shock collars in the UK (an estimated 300,000 in use in 2012), the majority of which are in the hands of people who have never been shown how to use one.

The bottom line: shock collars are both cruel and redundant. Whether you are in favour of increased regulation or an all-out ban, the time for change is now.

“We found enough evidence to justify considering changes to legislation,” said Jonathan. “It seems that the routine use of e-collars, even in accordance with best practice, as suggested by collar manufacturers, presents a risk to the well-being of pet dogs.”

Thankfully, we are winning the war on aversive training; our society no longer tolerates it and the law should reflect that. Some of the most reliable dogs in the world – police dogs, sniffer dogs, assistance dogs – are now trained with positive, reward-based methods.

We’ve all seen those airport shows, which always involve a bouncy Springer Spaniel being given a tennis ball for finding cocaine in someone’s pants. Wouldn’t you rather have a dog that is eager to please, not shocked into submission? ★

Join the campaign to ban shock collars in the rest of the UK. Write to your MP and use the hashtag #BanShockCollars on Twitter.

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One step forward, two steps back

It looked as if the years of slow progress made by Harvey's Army and Jester's Law were beginning to pay off, but a recent announcement from the Highways Agency has resulted in an unexpected setback...

In 2005, Rottweiler Jester was stolen and reported missing. Owner Nikki Reay contacted the authorities, and was informed that the body of a black dog had been picked up on the A1 by the Highways Agency and incinerated.

Although Jester was microchipped, the Highways Agency had no record of the

identity of the deceased dog. This left Nikki in a state of limbo, not knowing whether the dog had been Jester or if he was still missing.

Six months later, forensics results proved that the body had been Jester's. If the Highways Agency had scanned the body for a microchip, Nikki's grief and worry would

not have been so prolonged, and her mind could have been put to rest.

Nikki then acted to make sure that other dog owners would not have to face the same ordeal, and in 2005 the Highways Agency issued the Area Management Memo 67/05, stating that all its depots would buy microchip scanners and provide refrigeration facilities so that owners could be informed and have the option of collecting their deceased pets.

In a similar turn of events, Poodle Harvey disappeared one evening. Three months later it was revealed that he had died on a nearby road 25 minutes after going missing.

Harvey's case exposed a hole in the system, and Harvey's Law was set up to urge the authorities to follow

Words:
Hannah Wynne

Illustration:
Kevin Brockbank



owners to trace their lost pets.

So why is this happening? A spokesperson for the Highways Agency has said, "In response to the requirements of the government's spending review 2010, the Highways Agency has been awarding a new type of contract that maximises efficiency and value for money for the taxpayer, without compromising road-user and road-worker safety. An element of this has been the removal of our mandatory policy for handling canine fatalities.

"While the mandatory policy has been removed, our contractors may still scan for a chip when an animal is found. They will attempt to reunite the owner with the animal whenever possible."

This new stance comes as a shock, but there is light at the end of the tunnel. The growth of the campaign group Harvey's Army and its fusion with Jester's Law has meant that it is beginning to take the place of the Highways Agency when it comes to picking up pets.

The group currently has 31 volunteers working on the roads to scan any pets and reunite them with their owners.

Harvey's Army's Nina Blackburn says, "We are like the fifth emergency service."

Once news of a run-over pet is reported on the Harvey's Law Facebook page, a volunteer rushes out to scan it and contact the owners. The volunteers aim to reach the animal before the council does, because the authorities might not log a report or trace the owners if they get there first.

The group is also in the process of negotiating with pet crematoria across the country to scan and identify pets before they are cremated. *

their own procedures by scanning domestic animals retrieved from the highways and logging a report that can be used for identification purposes.

Harvey's Law has now united with Jester's Law to move the campaign forward.

The blow

The group has been notified that Area Management Memo 67/05 is being phased out. This means there will be no procedures for the Highways Agency to follow and no records for any dogs picked up on the roads.

In other words, it will be even more difficult for

Harvey's Army is always looking for volunteers. Get in touch via the Harvey's Law Facebook page, and sign the e-petition at <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/62490>



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In Focus:

Photo exhibition highlights the international stray dog problem

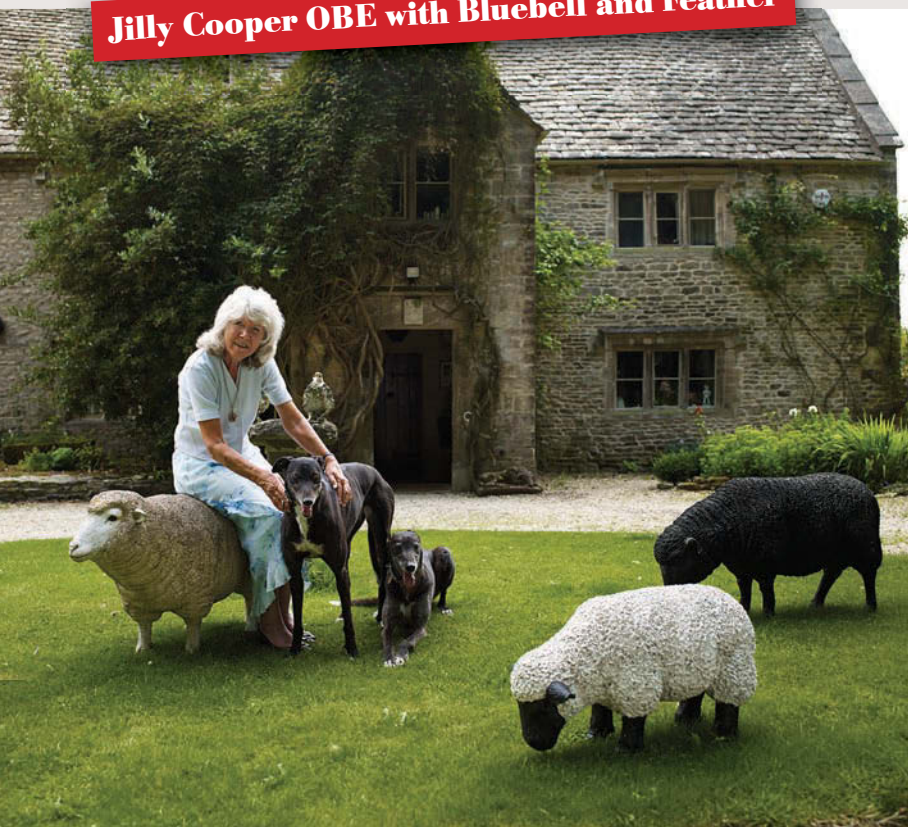
Stray Dogs in Focus was a photographic exhibition held by the international animal welfare organisation Four Paws at the end of October. Its aim: to shed light on the growing number of stray and abandoned dogs in the UK and Romania, and the dangerous and uncertain future many of them face. According to the Dog Rescue Federation, 116,000 dogs were found straying on the UK's streets in 2013, and over half weren't claimed back by their owners. In Romania, the new policy to euthanise strays has since led to the deaths of 25,000 dogs in Bucharest alone.

Alongside the photos of strays, celebrities also featured with their own rescue dogs, sharing their stories to promote adoption and help to halt this ever-increasing problem.

Four Paws works to prevent illness and uncontrolled breeding of strays in a humane and sustainable way. The animals are neutered, vaccinated, wormed, and treated for illness and injury, as well as provided with food and water. Four Paws has worked on stray animal care projects in Lithuania, Ukraine, Jordan, India, and the Sudan, and has ongoing programmes in Romania and Bulgaria. Visit www.four-paws.org.uk

Introduction: **Victoria Heywood**
Photographs: **Jo Sax** Captions: **Four Paws**

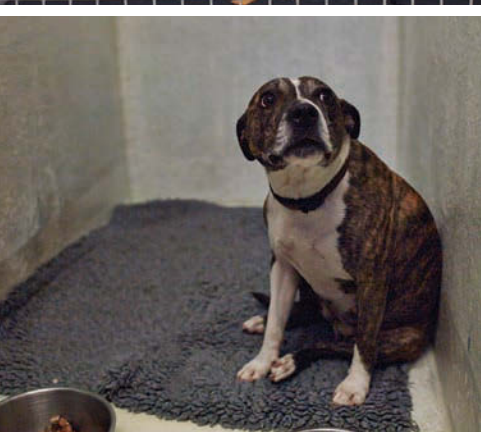
Jilly Cooper OBE with Bluebell and Feather



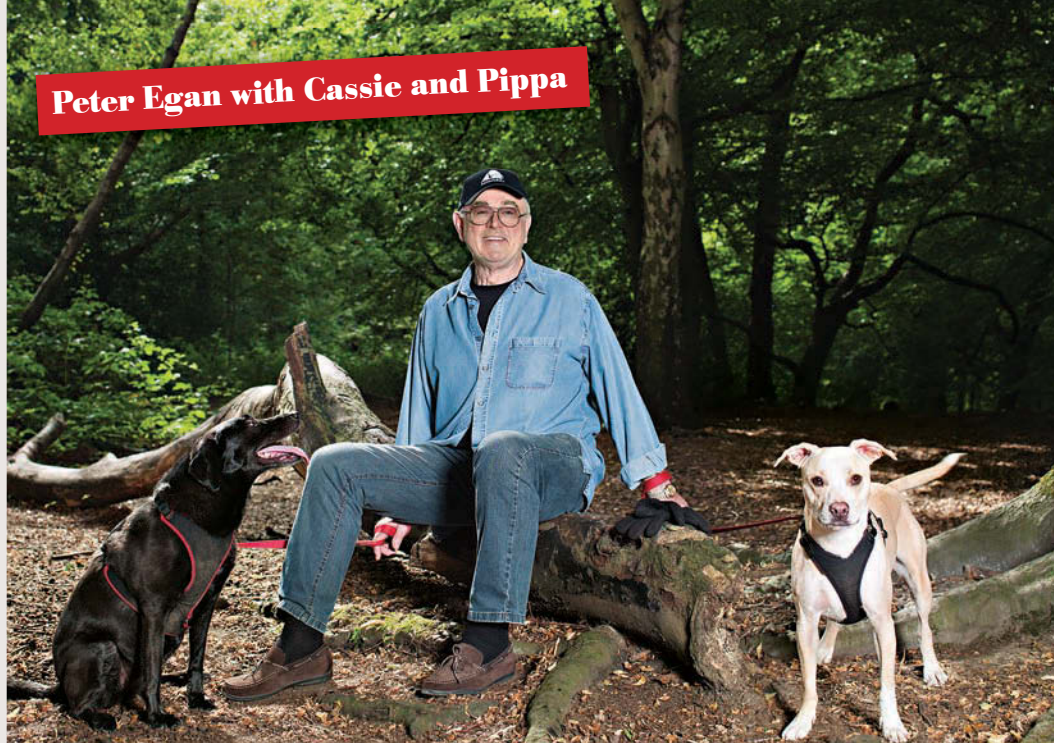
Author, Jilly Cooper OBE began her career as a journalist then wrote several romantic novels and numerous works of non-fiction, including *Mongrel Magic* which contains many stories of rescued mongrels. She is most famous for writing the *Rutshire Chronicles* which kicks off with *Riders*.

"The beautiful photograph is almost unbearably poignant because it is one of the last taken of Feather, my lovely black ex-racing Greyhound, who died of heart failure in September at the age of twelve. Eight years ago in the middle of winter, he was found wandering in County Offaly, a tottering skeleton still in his racing muzzle. He had been chucked out and heartlessly left to starve to death. Remarkably the Orchard Sanctuary rescued him and nursed him back to health, before he joined our family.

For reasons beyond my comprehension, it appears that retired black Greyhounds have always found it difficult to find new homes. With this in mind, I made the decision to adopt three year old Bluebell from the same sanctuary to act as a companion for Feather. Unlike him, she is a clown and a complete applause junkie, but like he was, she is utterly adorable and neither dog ever bore any grudge against humans."



Peter Egan with Cassie and Pippa

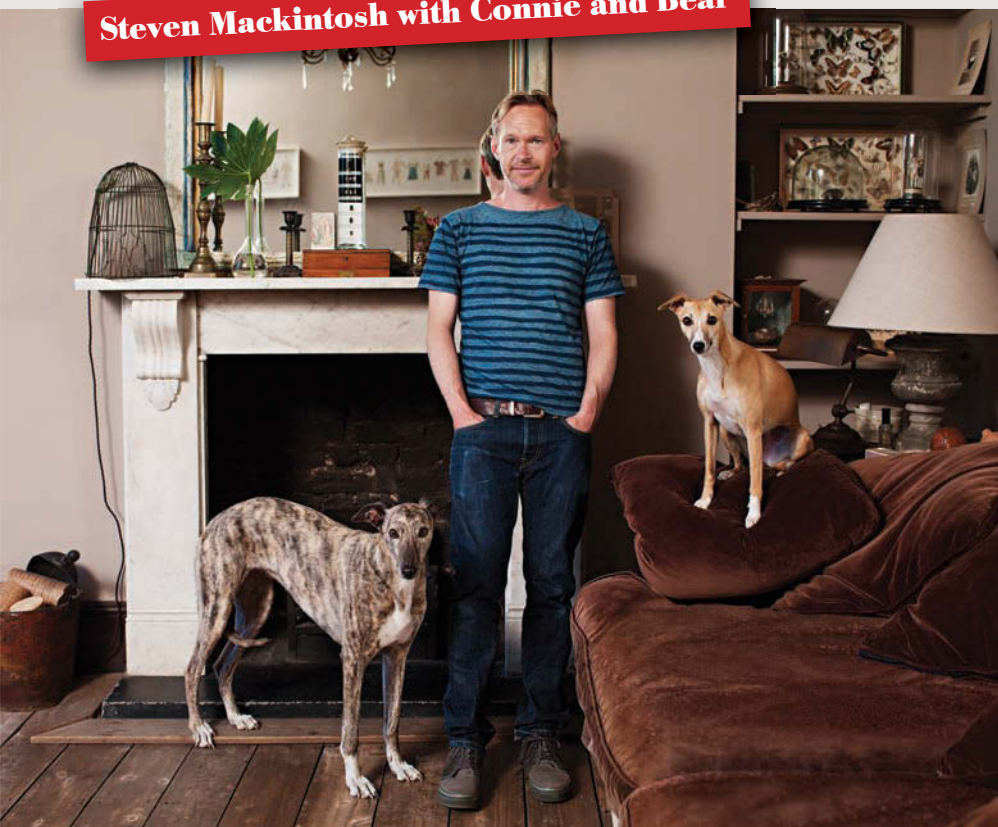


Peter Egan is a British film, TV, and stage actor. He is best known for his roles in *Ever Decreasing Circles*, *Chariots of Fire*, the future King George IV in *Prince Regent*, and more recently, for his role in ITV's *Downton Abbey*.

"I have a total of six rescue dogs, although only two are present in this photo. They are Pippa, who is a four-year-old Staffie-Whippet cross, and my six-year-old Labrador, named Cassie. Cassie was rescued from a puppy farm and Pippa came from a London dog pound. Pippa was due to be euthanized had a rescue place not been found. Being a chairman and trustee of the charity All Dogs Matter, I have always felt it right to adopt rescue dogs; and whilst Cassie and Pippa were originally intended as foster dogs, it quickly became apparent they had to stay. In essence it has been the dogs that have always chosen us, never the other way round.

We have much to learn from dogs. Their ability to forgive, to forget, and to live in the moment always astounds me. They have also made me deeply aware of the power of compassion. Once you discover just how many dogs are killed in the UK, as a result of careless breeding and irresponsible ownership, you quickly realise that rescue and adoption is the right thing to do."

Steven Mackintosh with Connie and Bear



Steven Mackintosh is a British Actor, best known for his roles in *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, *Underworld Evolution* and *Rise of the Lycans*.

"We have two rescue dogs. There is Connie, who is a ten-year-old Greyhound, and Bear, who is an eighteen-month-old Whippet cross. Connie was found straying and taken to Battersea Dogs & Cats Home. Although we aren't entirely sure of her history, we believe she may have been used for hunting rather than racing, as she is not tattooed.

Bear came from Greyhound Rescue Kent, and showed signs of being mistreated in her past life. We were concerned as to whether Connie and Bear would bond as a pair. However, they took to each other immediately, and have got on like a house on fire ever since. Bear also showed herself to have a wonderful temperament. We have found it a misconception that these two breeds are high maintenance; for example, Connie loves just lazing about the house. I can't imagine life without them."

Amanda Abbington



with Jodie, Stanley and Arthur

Actress, Amanda Abbington is best-known for playing Miss Mardle in *Mr Selfridge* and Mary Morstan in BBC's adaptation of *Sherlock*.

"I am the proud owner of three incredible, family-loving, rescue dogs. Whilst their backgrounds and personalities are distinctly different, they all bring equal joy, love and happiness to every member of our household. I call them 'The Three Stooges', and naturally have great adoration for each and every one.

Jodie is an eleven year old female, who came into the family after her previous owners entered sheltered housing and could no longer care for her, whilst our fourteen month old Dachshund, Arthur, was adopted as a puppy when his owner fell ill and, similarly, could no longer cope. He suffers from a congenital liver condition, but, like a true fighter, he never gives up. Stan, my other rescued male, is now two years of age.

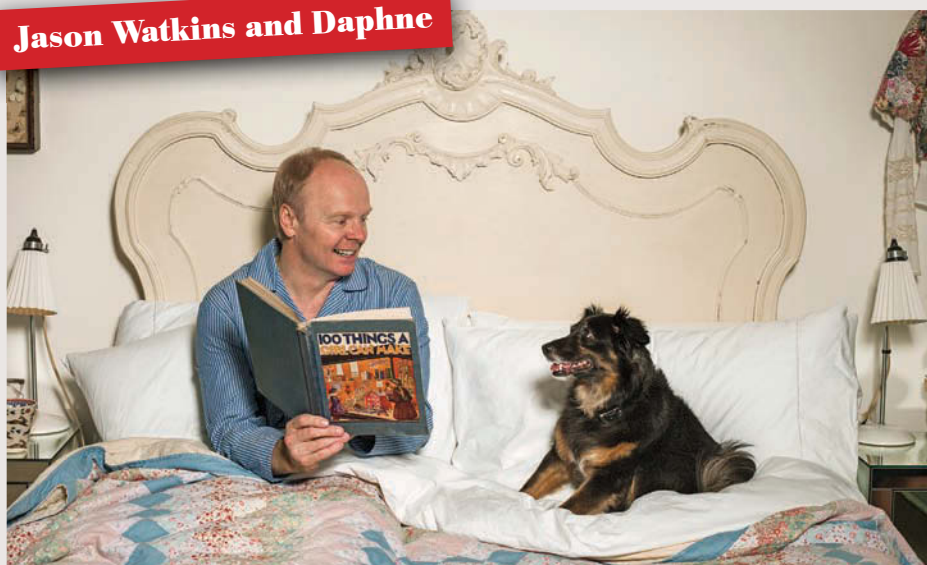
He, sadly, came from an abusive home, but, as with Jodie and Arthur, with time and patience, he quickly became a member of the family."

Actor, Jason Watkins is a British stage, film and television actor, best-known for his roles in *W1A*, *Being Human*, *Trollied*, *Psychoville*, the *Nativity* films and, soon to be screened, *The Lost Honour of Christopher Jefferies*.

"Daphne is a ten-year-old German Shepherd-Poodle-Staffie cross. This is a recent revelation to us, having just received the results of a DNA test we carried out on her! We adopted Daphne from a small rescue in the Midlands run by the wonderful Shirley Dillon. Shirley's rescue acts as a sort of halfway house for rescue cats and dogs. She takes in very distressed stray or sick animals and tirelessly brings them back to good health. She then finds loving homes for them. At around one month old, Daphne was rescued by the RSPCA from a suspected abusive household, she and her emaciated mother were in a terrible condition, and Shirley nursed them both back to full health. Daphne joined our family at three months old.

We walk Daphne on Hampstead

Jason Watkins and Daphne



Heath every day rain or shine (she has boundless energy and needs lots of walking). I love our walks together, not only does it make her deliriously happy, I find it a great way to clear my mind of the usual daily stresses and strains. She is without doubt the best

dog I have ever had. She has a huge loving personality and is wonderful with our children. She is one of a kind. I would never buy a pedigree dog from a breeder when there are so many wonderful, unique, rescue dogs out there looking for happy homes."

Julie Hesmondhalgh and Birdie



Actress, Julie Hesmondhalgh is best known for her award-winning role as Hayley Cropper in *Coronation Street*.

"Bridie was only three months old when she was rescued, back in 2008, by a small animal rescue run by Shirley Dillon in the Midlands. We had been thinking for some time about adopting a retired racing Greyhound, and had taken some steps via Facebook to do so. Then we received the call about two Lurcher puppies in need of adoption, which quickly halted our other plans. My husband Ian drove down and collected Bridie the very next day.

Remarkable to think now, but we had planned a holiday to Llandudno the day after adopting Birdie, for our daughter's fourth birthday. I have a great memory of just the four of us in a little room, at a lovely dog-friendly bed and breakfast, with an adorable puppy in a cardboard box. Needless to say, we can't imagine life without her now." ✨

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Clarissa— 7 we've been together now for 40 years

Beyoncé, Britney, Kylie, Madonna: you instantly know them just by hearing their first name.

There was only ever one Clarissa for me.

After 40 years at Britain's biggest and most influential dog charity, Clarissa Baldwin is passing the lead to her deputy, Adrian Burder.

Clarissa has been top dog since 1986. Respected charity

mag *Third Sector* reported: "In the 1980s she became the first female chief executive of a major charity. But her abiding legacy to the voluntary sector was probably when she jettisoned 112 years of history by changing the name of the National Canine Defence League to the Dogs Trust."

In 1974 when the ex-model strode into NCDL's Marble Arch offices as its new head of PR, the charity was not in as

good a shape as she was in!

Clarissa told *The Independent* in 2013, "It was so cold we had to wear mittens to type. I sat on a sofa that I'm quite sure every stray dog had peed on!"

But this was a charity with tremendous history, born of great passion and a desperate need to defend dogs in society. However, when Clarissa arrived it was the charity that was most in need of rescuing.

When Clarissa started, NCDL

Words:
Beverley Cuddy

income was just £750,000 a year with outgoings probably much the same – or even more! If you look on the Charity Commission website today, you'll see that income has grown more than 100 fold to £76,560,000 for 2013.

Clarissa was so much more than just a pretty face.

She has always been the unifier, the encourager, the diplomat with the winning smile – but at her core there was the relentless drive of a Border Collie. I have always found her reliably at her desk before 8am. She has been a model CEO in every way.

The NCDL had toyed with a name change for some time. Clarissa told *Third Sector*: "It was quite clear after a while that the initials were like alphabet spaghetti and even if you got past them, some people still didn't know the 'D' stood for 'defence' – they thought it stood for 'dog'.

Born again

"We had only six per cent unprompted awareness and that hadn't changed for a number of years."

Now, people can scarcely remember the charity not being called Dogs Trust. It is such a good name.

I asked Clarissa about how dog problems have changed in her time at the charity.

"When I joined, there were still packs of strays on the streets, latchkey dogs were still pretty much normal."

I remember the 70s and falling out with a girl at school whose dog, Scott, used to roam the neighbourhood, siring countless unplanned litters. She seemed so proud of her dog's ability to dodge traffic; she thought that survival was a mark of intelligence.

Today, the dog just has



In 2013
Dogs Trust cared
for 14,769 dogs in
19 centres in
the UK and
Ireland

12,742
found a
forever home

different problems, but the stated aim of the charity still looks a long way off to me: "Dogs Trust is working

towards the day

when all dogs can enjoy a happy life, free from the threat of unnecessary destruction."

"We are worried by footfall being down both at the centres and on our website," said Clarissa.

"Too many people are going online to find the small, cute dogs they want. There simply aren't ever going to be enough of those dogs in rescue – and sadly, cheap, badly bred foreign imports are filling the void.

"It's a worry. Just one click and a ridiculously cheap French Bulldog can be delivered to your door.

We need the public to

become much more wary of where and how these dogs have been bred."

Clarissa was hopeful that the new EU Dog and Cat Alliance may make a difference and that the European parliament can do something to stop the animal trafficking and the suffering it causes.

Defra really have been deaf



Dogs Trust projects

★ The Freedom Project (for victims of domestic violence and their pets)



★ The Hope Project (for homeless people and their dogs)

★ Paws for Progress (a prison-based dog training course run in partnership with the University of Stirling and the Scottish Prison Service)



★ The Lets with Pets scheme, to encourage dog-friendly landlords

PLUS: Dogs Trust has a national network of education officers working with schools, and runs the International Companion Animal Welfare Conference (ICAWC), which has 300 delegates from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas



to all logic on the subject of illegal imports. Clarissa said they were looking at a risk assessment into whether staff should be rabies vaccinated, as so many of these dogs are coming in with overseas chips.

**Donations
to Dogs Trust
were up an
impressive
10 per cent
in 2013**

For Clarissa, the charity has certainly been for life and not just the six months she'd expected.

"It's been the best job in the world," she said.

I am sure most of our readers will know that she was the genius who invented the iconic slogan 'A Dog is for life, not just for Christmas' – and that was a staggering 35 years ago!

It's copyrighted and protected now, but that hasn't stopped people trying to pinch it!

I remember the surprising Ann Summers' billboards proclaiming: "A rabbit is for life..." Ever the diplomat, Clarissa changes the subject at this point to something more respectable.

"Marks and Spencer very kindly asked us first and used it at Christmas for their 'A bag is for life' promotion and sent us a £10,000 donation."

She recalled chief vet Chris Lawrence's surprise at spotting the iconic sticker on the back of a car in New Zealand.

Dogs Trust's latest centre has just opened in Manchester and they really do know what works.

While Clarissa may be retiring from the day job, there's no chance of boredom setting in. She's taking up a trustee's role at the charity, she's always been involved in Hearing Dogs, and, more recently, she's become a trustee of the brilliant Mission Rabies. She's not long ago become a granny, too!

But I for one would like to see her still encouraging our politicians to be much more dog friendly. While Dame Clarissa sounds OK, Lady Clarissa has more of a ring to it, don't you think? I'd love to see her in the House of Lords, speaking up for our best friends.

I was one of many people who wrote to encourage the granting of her OBE, but that was a few years back now; surely she's earned an upgrade?

We all have a lot to thank Clarissa for, but, on a personal note, I have a beloved Dogs Trust dog, Tess, at my feet as I write.

Having read and appreciated

the charity's history, I am even more in awe of the charity and what Clarissa did to preserve it for future generations.

If you think she deserves an honour, here's how to nominate her: <https://www.gov.uk/honours/nominate-someone-in-the-uk> ★





Walk with Me was founded in February 2014 by Elena and Marc Matthewman, both passionate dog lovers, who fittingly first met when walking their dogs, Freddie, Charly and Indy, in a local park in Nottingham. “The concept is really very simple”, Marc explains. “Walk with Me is all about beautiful, top quality and unique products for dogs - including very large breeds - and people who love dogs. We take great pride in our starter collection of products, many of which are handmade to order, and all of which are designed and selected for the best quality, functionality and style.”

The Walk with Me pillow beds, blankets, sleeping bags, accessories and interior design items are designed and hand made in England, by Walk with Me and in collaboration with a select number of fantastic local art & crafts people. “We are incredibly grateful for all the encouragement and support we have received along the way, and just so impressed and inspired by the creativity and wonderful craftsmanship we have encountered.”, Elena says. Basket beds are expertly made for Walk with Me by a renowned Yorkshire pet bed manufacturer. The Walk with Me starter collection



“Despite increasing variety and choice on the market, we felt that it remained often difficult to find exactly what we were looking for – our repeated unsuccessful quests to buy a dog bed big enough to comfortably accommodate Freddie, our huge greyhound, without compromising on quality and style, are just one example. So we set out to create our own collection of beautiful, unique products of the highest quality for dogs and people who love dogs... the best for your dog, beautifully!”, Elena explains. And of course, giant-sized dog beds for huge hounds

now hold a very special position in the Walk with Me



features a range of 100% British wool tweeds woven in Yorkshire, and some beautiful Peony & Sage linen fabrics. It also includes some outstanding leather products from Germany, Elena’s home country, as well as a small range of 100% natural treats and supplements.

collection – not least as a tribute to Freddie the greyhound, who sadly died of cancer when the brand development was in full flow, and who inspired the Walk with Me sighthound logo.



Ultimately, Elena and Marc want Walk with Me to stand for much more than ‘dog products’. “We want to honour the unique bond people form with their dogs, and accompany their life’s journey together. Walk with Me is about life and living with dogs, and about love and care for dogs, and this is what we want to express through what we do.”

Walk with Me products can be found online:- www.walkwithme.co.uk and in the Homeware section of the Country Living General Store (www.shop.countryliving.co.uk). Products are also available from the 8A Kingstreet Interiors Shop in Southwell.

Four values form the core of Walk with Me’s activities:

- The highest quality: hand selected fabrics (notably 100% British wools) and outstanding craftsmanship, supporting local arts & crafts
- Beautiful, unique designs: classic with contemporary touch
- Transparent, ethical sourcing of materials of natural origin wherever possible
- Fair pricing: Walk with Me product prices genuinely reflect material, labour and other costs for producing items of the highest quality

The couple’s decision to step out into the competitive market of pet supplies was driven by two main factors: The desire to share their passion for high quality, beautiful products for dogs; and the genuine belief that they would be able to add something unique and valuable to the existing landscape.



www.walkwithme.co.uk



Photo from *Knitted Dogs & Puppies*, by Sue Stratford

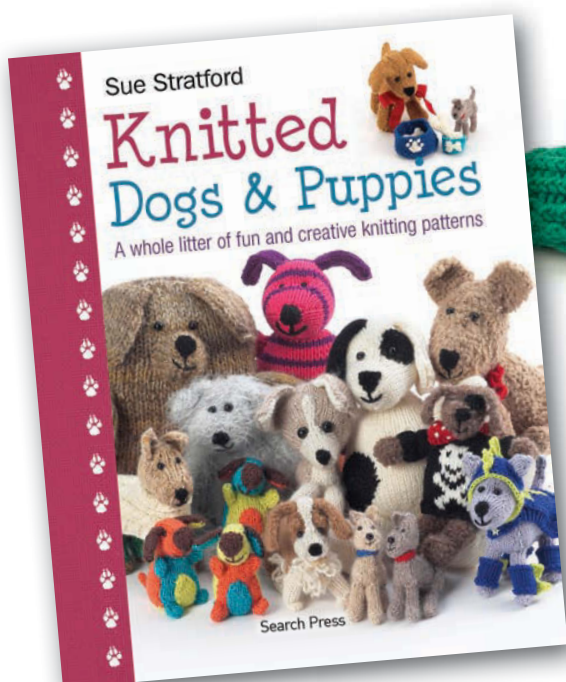
Canine Christmas creations

Everyone knows that homemade gifts are the best, so here at *Dogs Today* we have put together the best festive crafts to make for the special dog (or dog lover) in your life.

There has been something of a homemade revolution in Britain in recent years; knitting and baking are now retro-cool, a movement no doubt encouraged by the popularity of shows like the BBC's *The Great British Bake Off*. There's no reason why our pets should miss out, so grab your knitting needles and oven gloves...

Knitting

Knitting is fashionable again, and this year has seen a bumper crop of books to cash in on the growing market. Here's our rundown of the best dog ones out there:



Knitted Dogs & Puppies by Sue Stratford (Search Press, £9.99)

Sue Stratford's gorgeous knitted creations are animated and colourful. The cute characters that you can create with this book are perfect gifts for dog-mad children.

Words:
Victoria Heywood



Best in Show series by Sally Muir and Joanna Osborne (Collins and Brown/Pavilion, £12.99 each)

The Best in Show series has been around for a couple of years now, but if you want to knit more realistic designs check out this old favourite. It is likely you have already seen these charming creations - the knitting duo's Staffie design even featured as part of Battersea Dogs and Cats Home's 'Softer Than You Think' campaign.

The series includes patterns for 50 different breeds, but the possibilities are endless, as they are so easily adapted; last Christmas I made my auntie's rare Sealyham Terrier from an adjusted Scottie pattern.

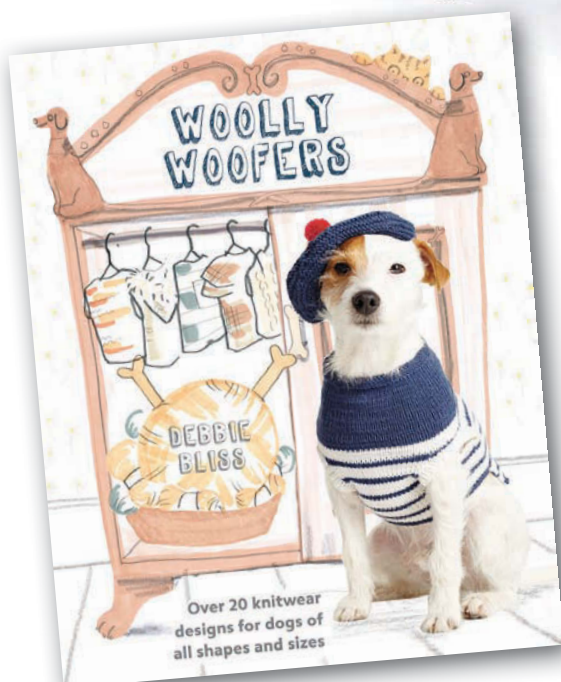


Photos by Holly Jolliffe

This year a few of the most popular breeds from the Best in Show series, such as the Golden Retriever and the Dachshund, are available as kits, which include all the yarn and equipment required for one dog.



Muir and Osborne also offer an exclusive 'dog portraiture' service, where they recreate your dog perfectly in knitted form - prices start from £200.



Woolly Woofers by Debbie Bliss (Quadrille, £14.99)

New for winter 2014, Woolly Woofers offers an array of patterns for fetching doggie jumpers and costumes. The bandanas are particularly good and so easy to personalise; I was able to knit one in no time.



Knitting

Outrageously Adorable Dog Knits (HarperCollins, £14.99)

Photos by Claire Lloyd Davis, © HarperCollins Publishers



From simple scarfs to monogrammed sweaters, *Outrageously Adorable Dog Knits* caters for all abilities of knitter and all sizes of dog – although do factor in the cost of wool if you have a Rottie as opposed to the model Pugs and Yorkies featured...



Needles for the needy...

If you do pick up one of the clothing titles, pay it forward and donate one of your creations to Jerry Green Dog Rescue's Great Doggy Knit Off...



Jerry Green Dog Rescue is asking for knitted dog coats, jumpers and blankets to help its many older dogs and young puppies that may suffer with the cold weather this winter.

Deliver or post your knitted items to any of the charity's five centres at:

Nottinghamshire:

Warsop Lane,
Blidworth,
Nottinghamshire,
NG21 0PG

Lincolnshire:

Broughton, North Lincolnshire,
DN20 0BJ

Algarkirk near Boston, South
Lincolnshire, Marsh Lane,
PE20 2BB

Yorkshire:

Bennetland Lane,
Gilberdyke, East Yorkshire,
HU15 2TN

Catton, Thirsk,
North Yorkshire, YO7 4SG

For more information and a free blanket knitting pattern, email enquiries@jerrygreendogs.org.uk or call 01652 657820.

Not a natural knitter?

You can still acquire wonderful pieces for your pet and support a great cause by buying from Action For Greyhounds' range of snoods, scarves and hats....

ovingly created by volunteer knitters, the Action For Greyhounds' range is designed especially for sighthounds, as their long necks and delicate ears need protection from the cold. The initiative got a real boost last December when comedian Jennifer Saunders appeared on the BBC's *The One Show* with her blue Whippet, Olive, who was wearing one of Action for Greyhounds' creations. The money from your purchase goes directly to the charity; Action for Greyhounds not only rescues and rehomes dogs in need, it actively campaigns against the Greyhound racing industry.

See the full range at www.actionforgreyhounds.co.uk/category/merchandise/dog-accessories



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Baking



More of us are choosing to create our dogs' meals from scratch, but if it's not a commitment you are willing to make year-round, Christmas is the time to treat. If you want to share your own dinner, see our list of dog-friendly foods for safety. For something simple yet special, here's our recipe for doggie ginger biscuits.

Doggie Ginger Biscuits

Ingredients

- ★ 180g of self-raising flour
- ★ 100g of peanut butter
- ★ 2½ teaspoons of ground ginger
- ★ ⅔ teaspoon of cinnamon
- ★ 1 egg, beaten

Method:

- 1 Pre-heat your oven to 200°C.
- 2 Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl to form a dough (add splashes of water if it is a bit crumbly).
- 3 Roll out the dough on a floured surface to around ¼ inch thick and cut out your biscuits.
- 4 Line up the biscuits on baking trays and bake for 15-20 minutes (depending on the size) until golden brown.
- 5 Cool before serving!

Sharing your festive feast?

No one wants a dog with an upset tummy or a trip to the emergency vet on Christmas Day. A simple but special lunch can be made from cooled cooked rice and leftovers, but keep any new foods in small quantities as treats or mixed in with your dog's regular diet.

✓ Turkey

Stick to the white meat without the skin, and absolutely no cooked poultry bones

✓ Veggies

Small amounts of carrot, parsnip and sprouts, but never onion

✓ Potatoes

Cooked and plain, potato is fine for dogs

✓ The cheeseboard

Cheese is a very special treat (due to its high fat and salt content); just avoid anything blue or particularly rich



✗ Gravy

High in salt, it is too much for dogs to cope with

✗ Stuffing

Far too rich for dogs, and is often full of an array of potentially upsetting fruits, nuts and spices

✗ Mince pies/Christmas pud

Vine fruits can cause kidney failure and death, even in tiny quantities



✗ Alcohol

Don't leave your fourth glass of port on the floor in range of pink tongues...

✗ Chocolate

Yes, there are still dog owners in this day and age who don't realise that chocolate intended for human consumption is highly poisonous to dogs





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Dangerous misconceptions

The Dangerous Dogs Act is responsible for the death of many innocents – canine and human alike

The press are reporting that the dog that killed the baby in Northants has been ruled to be a Pit Bull – which further proves that the Dangerous Dogs Act hasn't worked on any level.

Pit Bulls are the most vilified and legislated-against dogs in UK history. Had the Dangerous Dogs Act done the job that Kenneth Baker and the Tory government had intended it to do, the 1991 generation would have been the last: Pit Bull genocide by government order. Yet we now have very many more of these dogs than ever before.

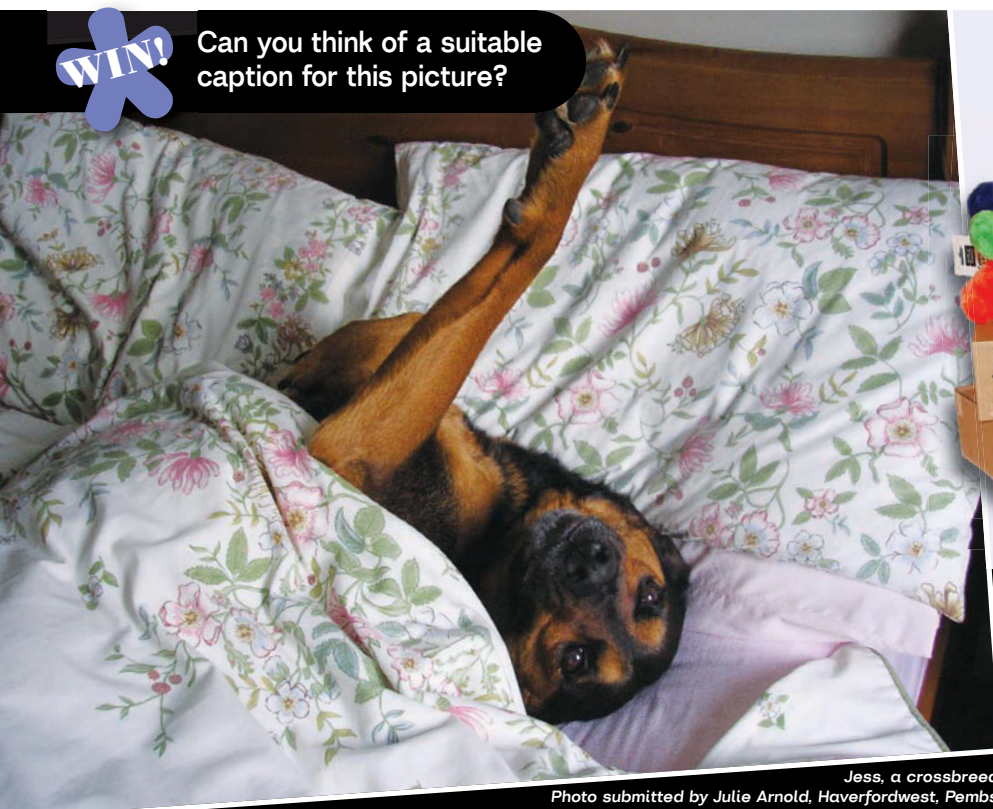
Kenneth Baker's autobiography reveals that it was the Kennel Club's top dog that had called for all Pit Bulls

to die, but Kenneth softened this to 'die or be neutered', as he didn't think the voters would like it very much.

The way the law defines a Pit Bull is just about as logical and fair as how we used to decide if a woman was a witch in the 17th century.

Far from measured. If someone accuses your dog of being a Pit Bull type, it will be taken away to a secret kennels, where a tape measure and a series of seemingly random dimensions will determine whether your dog is dangerous and illegal.

Many law-abiding, upstanding people used to



Can you think of a suitable caption for this picture?

Jess, a crossbreed
Photo submitted by Julie Arnold, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire

One winner will receive a jam-packed Big Box from Fings for Fido (www.fingsforfido.com).



HOW TO ENTER

Send your entries and contact details via email to comps@dogstodaymagazine.co.uk or post to: December Competitions, Dogs Today, The Old Print House, 62 The High Street, Chobham, Surrey GU24 8AA, to arrive by 8 December 2014

fear that knock on the door – some still do.

In the early 1990s, perfectly behaved pet dogs were ripped from their homes in the night by police wearing riot gear. Dogs that had never hurt anyone were killed because of a tape measure. Many dogs were destroyed that had never shown any aggression to anyone or anything. Many were very definitely not Pit Bulls at all.

No genes

Thankfully, due to a slight, but hard-fought amendment to the act, you can now, with some considerable difficulty, appeal. But you can't use DNA evidence to fight the tape measure; that evidence is banned.

Those that are now calling for even more legislation must realise that as this dog, now dead, has been retrospectively branded a Pit Bull type, there was already the legislation in place to have prevented this dog from even being born.

But had the attempted genocide worked – if all the Pit Bulls in Britain were dead – would babies really be safe? If all the dogs in the world were killed, would babies never die? Or would the obvious lack of adequate adult supervision that led to many of these terrible dog-related deaths just mean that a percentage would go on to drown in garden pools,

swallow bleach or fall and hit their heads on sharp corners of furniture?

The Dangerous Dogs Act has completely failed to save these children.

Isn't it time to accept that accidents happen and people make mistakes?

As a *Dogs Today* reader, you probably know many more people die of slipper or balloon-related accidents than dog bites; that there are more fatalities due to horse riding accidents than dog-related injuries.

One in four homes contains a dog. Nine million or so dogs that never hurt anyone. Many more contain dangerous slippers and balloons that have so far evaded legislation.

Yet, despite almost constant media vilification, ever-growing numbers of people are happy to take a Pit Bull-type dog into their homes, seemingly oblivious of the law that states they should all be neutered, muzzled, chipped, insured – and actually shouldn't exist at all!

What notice would anyone take of the dog licence when the good old British public have managed to dodge Pit Bull genocide and turned it into population growth?

The only way to tackle any of the real issues of dogs in society is to make breeding have a consequence – to stem the flood of passive dog ownership that

sees us routinely kill 20 healthy dogs every day in Britain.

The licence is just another red herring – something to make the government look as if it's taking action when it's cornered by the press.

Perhaps we should be compassionate to the 1991 Conservative government. It had been whipped into a frenzy by the media and encouraged to react aggressively. Anyone would have lashed out.

But should we ever forgive the successive governments that looked at this ludicrous piece of legislation and merely tweaked it without putting it to sleep?

Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrats – they've all been as clueless as one another.

Making plans for Nigel

The only way of getting MPs to take dog issues seriously is to take the lead. Ukip's stance on Europe got all the other parties wanting to pinch their voter-friendly ideas. So why not do a bit of a Nigel for the dog?

A quarter of the electorate have dogs, yet do any of the main parties have a dogifesto?

Do you think it's time that dog lovers became political animals? Do you think our current dog legislation is barking mad?

If there were a Puppy Party, would you vote for it? ★

What notice would anyone take of the dog licence when the good old British public have managed to dodge Pit Bull genocide and turned it into population growth?

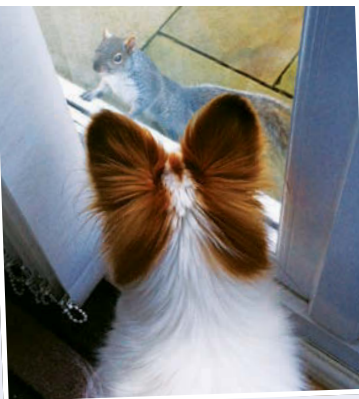
Words:
Beverley
Cuddy



Photo submitted by Lucy Holland

Can you guess which breeds Merlin's parents are? The first correct entry will win either a specific breed book or a general book on dogs courtesy of Interpet Publishing.

Please state your preferred choice of book.



I'm not allowed to chase you... I'm a guide dog for the 'blind'!

Alison Barlow

I thought you were meant to be a secret squirrel?

Michelle Petworth

Wow, if you're a butterfly, how big are the dogs around here?

Wendy Bennett

Barman, I'll have a gin and tonic. I've been working my nuts off all day

Roz Pooley

October issue's competition winners

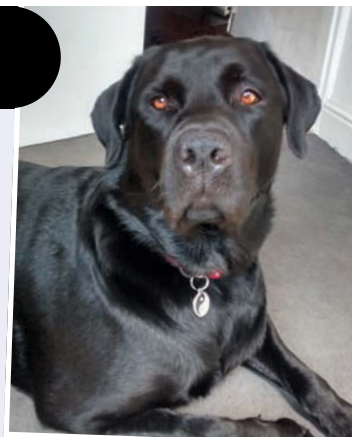
Ha! There's none in here, Mr Squiz, I've been neutered!

Helen Sedgwick

Runners-up:

A nut milkshake and small flies, please

Annabel Bridges



Ollie's parents are a Labrador and a Rottweiler. The first correct entry came from Will Heslop, who wins the *Mini Encyclopedia of Dog Health* book from Interpet Publishing (01306 873822) www.interpet.co.uk

1

Do you know anything about Honey's background? We were told that Honey was with a family who moved back to China. We don't know where or when she was bred.

2

What's the most indulgent thing you've done for Honey? She has her own room with a day bed in, and we feed her the best quality food. The other night my girlfriend laughed because I served her butternut squash, fresh roasted chicken and asparagus. She thought I was making it for her!

3

What's the naughtiest thing Honey has ever done? Honey got a permanent marker between her paws and then ran into every room, leaving permanent black pawprints on my oatmeal-coloured carpets. I spent the rest of the evening on my knees, trying to get the marks off with vodka and hairspray, having quickly Googled how best to remove the stains!



Jules Knight was a member of vocal group Blake before taking the role of Harry Tressler in *Holby City*. He shares his life with Honey, an 18-month-old Golden Retriever from Battersea Dogs and Cats Home



10

Do you have a favourite doggie day out? We're lucky to live very close to Richmond Park, so we're there nearly every day and she loves walking down the stream there. The other favourite is Holkham beach in Norfolk.

4

Does Honey have any special talents? When I was younger, we had a retriever who would catch and return anything you threw at her. Honey can't catch and she only retrieves about one in 20 balls we throw. But she's the best snuggler in the world. Her speciality is love, which she gives 24/7.

9

Does Honey ever come to work with you? I've been trying to persuade the *Holby City* bosses to allow us to have our dogs at BBC Elstree, but they don't seem keen. To be fair, Honey would probably cause havoc on the wards!

5

Do you have a favourite doggie product or gadget? We love the Kong Wobbler. We fill it with kibble or treats and she pushes it with her nose or paws to get treats to fall out of a hole on the side. It then wobbles back upright. She took a while to work it out, but now she loves it and we feed all of her kibble through that and the slow feeder.

8

If you and Honey were stranded on a desert island, what three luxury items would you want? I'd probably take a shovel, as Honey is a poo machine! I couldn't have poo strewn all over the beach while I'm trying to survive/sunbathe! Other than that, I'd like some sun cream for us both and some dog food.



7

Which famous person would you say Honey most closely resembles? Marilyn Monroe... She's a blonde floozy.

6

What's the best piece of dog advice you've been given and who gave it to you? There are three ladies at Battersea - Jo, Carly and Nathalie - who have given so much amazing advice and support. We've learnt so many things about having a dog and we're still learning. Realising that it really doesn't help to shout and scream at a dog when it does something wrong was a big lesson.

Jules Knight is a supporter of Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, which is fundraising to replace its original kennels with brand new facilities, designed to help improve the quality of life for the animals in its care. To support a Battersea dog you can Pay for a Day by donating at www.battersea.org.uk

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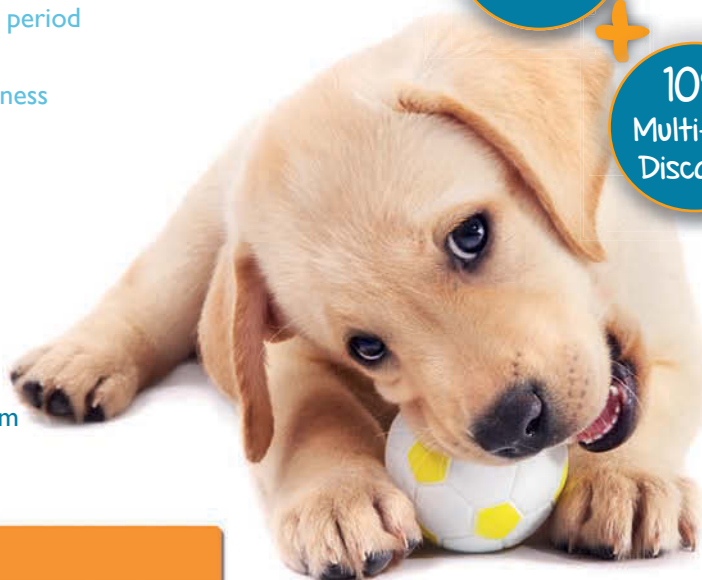
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The
Great

Debate

How does your dog
travel in your car?

Is it safe to allow your dog to lean
out of the car window?



Join the debate!

If you have a strong opinion on this subject that is not already covered here email enquiries@dogstodaymagazine.co.uk putting 'Car windows' in the subject line. Please limit your response to 100 words maximum.

Next month's topic is 'Can you work full-time and give a dog sufficient quality of life? Are these dog borrowing websites a help – or wouldn't you ever trust a stranger with your dog?' Email editorial@dogstodaymagazine.co.uk with your thoughts, putting 'Can you work full-time and have a dog' in the subject line or write to 'Great Debate', *Dogs Today*, The Old Print House, 62 The High St, Chobham, Surrey, GU24 8AA

No!

Many years ago, my car was sandwiched between two

lorries. I used to allow my dogs to hang out of the window, but when this happened, it struck home that a dog hanging out of the window would have been decapitated. From then on, they have never been allowed. I now have a soft-top car and I allow the dog to sniff out the top, but the windows are kept up.

Pamela Joyce

No!

Heidi travels in a car harness and she is clipped to the seatbelt holder. I have electric windows with a child lock. One day, I forgot to put the lock on. She pushed the button and the window opened wide. She started trying to get out of the window. It's very scary when you are on your own and you cannot stop.

It is a pet hate of mine to see dogs with their heads out of the window, as you just do not know if they will see something and try to jump out.

Margaret Russell

Dogs are dogs. Let them hang their heads out the window. I've had dogs all my life and I've never heard of an incident.

Yes!

David Chauvette

No!

I once saw a dog jump out of a moving car and I've also seen small dogs on the driver's knee. Not only is it a danger to the driver but also to other road users. As responsible dog owners, we're responsible for their safety – just imagine an unsecured dog in a collision! I wouldn't want that on my conscience.

Ian Thomson

Yes!

Dogs have a sixth sense for danger and if they see something coming, they will immediately duck back inside the car. They are much smarter than teenagers and they don't stick their heads more than 60cm out of the car.

Caitlin Sloan

I think it is very dangerous. I will not let my children hang out of the windows while I am driving and the same rule applies to my dog.

It is true we are becoming more PC as a society, but we are also becoming more enlightened. I remember as a child driving in my parents' car and not wearing a seatbelt. There were even occasions I may have sat on an adult's lap, or had a younger child sat on mine. I would not dream of doing this today, as I am more aware of how potentially dangerous it is.

Yes, the dog may think it is fun to have his head out of the window, but we have the responsibility to keep our pets safe.

Here's my Bearded Collie, Logan, wearing his harness in the car when he was a puppy.

Anita Loughrey



No!

Yes!

Bear gets a little ice-cream cone after visits to the vet, so that he isn't afraid of going. We don't let Bear out of the window any further than what you can see in this photo.

Heather Halstead

Having seen Marley and Me where the dog climbs out of the window while they are driving, I don't feel it is safe to open the windows unless the dog is secured in the car and you can use remote access to wind the windows up.

No!

Lucy Fletcher

No!

Would people allow their children to do it? I doubt it. It might not be dangerous for the dog while all is well, but if the car were to stop suddenly or be involved in an accident, the poor dog wouldn't stand a chance. Secure your dogs as you would your children.

Julie Baldwin

I think the nose out is PC, but not the entire head. We have to protect the eyes, and dogs have been known to fall or jump out of car windows.

Tammy Campbell

No!

No!

My dog did this as a pup, until the day she stood on the close button and I panicked, trying to stop the window closing on her neck. She's secured with a seatbelt now, so it's not an issue any more.

Ainslie Clelland

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Yes!

I'm all for keeping our dogs safe, but sometimes I think dogs have to be dogs, and, with some supervision, I don't see any harm. They must feel like a child getting a thousand presents on Christmas Day with all the scents showering their senses!

Here's Heidi the Miniature Schnauzer as a pup, going topless in the countryside.

Amy Fisher

Tia has always been allowed to have her head out of the car window, but only for short journeys. We took her to the park once and before we reached it, she started to shake her head. This continued throughout our walk and she scratched occasionally, so we cut short the walk and took her to the vet.

The vet had a good look in both of her ears and could find nothing, but one was red and slightly irritated. Whatever had been in her ear had found its way out. She had a steroid injection to stop any further irritation and was OK a few hours later.

She is now no longer allowed to have her head out of the window, no matter how short the journey is. She sniffs and snorts at the windows, but it isn't worth taking the risk.

Teresa Prime



My little Jack used to do this until she slipped her collar (which was attached to a seatbelt clip) and jumped out of the window at traffic lights to say hello to a passing cyclist!

Chaos and mayhem ensued and I nearly had a heart attack. Now she has to settle for a two-inch gap to wedge her nose out of. Never again!

Karyn Lacey

No!

No!

Our girl loves to sniff the air when the windows are down, but she's fitted in her harness and plugged into the seatbelt, so there's no way she can get out. I don't see a problem with noses out, but definitely no heads out! If a dog's head is out of the window, they can't be secure in the car!

Chloe Silverwood

My dogs usually travel in cages fitted into the truck. I also have bars across the windows so they can only stick a portion of their noses out. I have no problem with that, as I always worry that they are not getting enough air. I don't like the whole head out of a window, just as you wouldn't have your child hanging out the window.

Margaret Leighton

No!



Yes!

My Toby loves it and I don't see a problem with it as long as you're safe about it.

Stacey Goulding

I cringe every time I see this. I worked at a vet's in my younger days and a dog came in to get its eye removed after it had its head out of the window. The dog was hit by a stone spun up by a car wheel.

Karen Kidd

No!

No!

The problem is that fine particles in the air can become embedded in their eyes or ears.

Yisraela Shulamith

It's common sense: use dog harnesses. Put your windows up in faster speed areas, and don't have the windows down to the extent that your dog might be tempted to jump out if he gets excited at seeing another dog or cat

Edmund Cecil Hogmanay Melchett

No!



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No!

My girls travel in their crates where they are safe. In a car accident, loose dogs can be thrown during impact and could cause another accident or be killed; at the very least they would take off in fear. My biggest problem is seeing people driving with a dog half hanging out of the driver's window!

Pauline Carter



Yes!

This is Oreo when travelling! Both my Springers like to do it, and they are harnessed and attached, and the window lock is on at all times. I see no harm in it and they do choose to pop back in when the speed increases.

Carole Leighton

No!

Personally, mine have to make do with the breeze coming from the front windows while they are in the back. An insect (or a bit of debris) could become a missile at speed. I've had flies hit my face while cycling at about 15-20mph, and that hits hard enough. And if it's in my eye, however small... Arghh!

Laura Hector

Off the Leash by Rupert Fawcett



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Documenting the changes

Here is the final part of our pet passport Q&A with Defra. Last month we looked at the practical changes that take place from December onwards. Now we look at some of the broader issues, together with some of the specific questions you asked us to put to them...

Q Why change who can microchip dogs? Will this be Europe-wide or only in the UK? How will this be recorded on the pet passport? Will this be for all chip implantation or just for people wishing to have a pet passport?

A The new EU pet travel regulation requires any EU country that allows people other than vets to implant microchips to lay down the minimum standards to which that person must be trained.

We are proposing to align our standards with those due to be introduced shortly under domestic requirements (in England and Wales) for all dogs to be microchipped. This will mean that anyone implanting

a microchip in a dog (for pet travel or otherwise) in England and Wales will need to meet certain requirements.

Where cats and ferrets are being microchipped in order to travel abroad, it will be necessary for the microchip to be implanted by someone who meets the minimum standards we will lay out in national law.

The pet passport will record the microchip number and the date of implantation/reading. >>>

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The EU pet travel rules exist to protect human and animal health and apply wherever an EU border is crossed. These rules must be applied consistently by all EU countries and it is therefore necessary for pets travelling between the Republic of Ireland and the UK to be vaccinated against rabies and to comply with the requirements of the pet travel scheme.

Dogs imported for sale or rehoming must comply with additional rules established under the commercial import regime (Balai directive) that are designed to safeguard welfare and ensure the traceability of consignments.

The new EU pet travel regulation does introduce a provision that would allow the movement of unvaccinated pets between two rabies-free countries. This would only apply to pets travelling with their owners and not those imported for sale or rehoming. Any two countries wishing to enter into this kind of arrangement must make a joint application to the European Commission. We will be considering if entering in this kind of arrangement with other rabies-free EU countries could be beneficial to the UK.

Q Dogs Today's recent pet passport survey revealed inconsistencies in how border checks are carried out. Many carriers ask the dog's owner to scan for the chip and do not even look at the pet. Many carriers don't check for other pets in the car. Many of those surveyed had witnessed this on more than 10 occasions, making people question the expense and hassle of passports if checks are going to be so sloppy.

On the BVA webinar you said that the carriers checked the chip and checked the dog against the description in the passport. Does the audit check that this actually happens? The survey suggests it is routinely not the case.

Do the carriers have any warning of when they are due to be audited? Could the failure rate be artificially low, as people know they are being assessed? Could a 'secret shopper' check be initiated?

A pet's microchip forms the objective link between the pet and the passport. The compliance check involves scanning the pet's microchip and confirming that the same number is present on the pet passport (or third country certificate, if they are travelling from outside the EU). The pet checker is then able to confirm whether they have been prepared for travel correctly, with the right treatments given in the right order.

In some cases the pet checker may ask the owner to scan their pet's microchip. This is designed to minimise the stress of the checking process.

Audit checks are regularly carried out to ensure that the carriers are conducting their checks effectively and the results show that they are doing a good job. The carriers do not know when these checks will be conducted. In 2013 audit checks were carried out on 4,894 pets and only 1.2% were found to be non-compliant.

The carriers check every pet travelling on an approved route that is declared to them by their owners. Where transport companies suspect that pets are concealed in a vehicle they will report this to the relevant authorities. In addition, UK Border Force conducts a wide range of targeted checks on arrival in the UK and where undeclared animals are discovered, this is reported to AHVLA or the local authority.

Q Why do dogs from Ireland need a rabies vaccination for the UK? Neither island has had rabies for almost 100 years. The additional cost and time constraints involved are causing rescue dogs in Ireland to die, as many UK rescues are running scared of this legislation. Are there any plans to soften the borders between us and other EU rabies-free countries?

Q Many people are shocked that despite the Channel 4 Dispatches exposé, the bulk import of underage pups for resale has not stopped and that even with the December 2014 revisions, there appears to be no plan to recruit or train anyone who does border checks to assess whether these pups are underage and therefore unvaccinated and travelling on counterfeit paperwork.

Accurately assessing the age of a puppy can be very difficult. However, where AHVLA or UK Border Force suspect that a puppy is too young to have been vaccinated, they can alert the local authority, who may then place the pet into quarantine where it can be assessed by a vet.

We are aware that some unscrupulous traders may be abusing the pet travel scheme in order to bring very young puppies into the country for sale. These people are breaking the

law and Defra and AHVLA are working closely with operational partners to crack down on this trade and prosecute those responsible.

If a person fails to provide information or produces information known to be false or misleading, they are committing an offence under the Non-Commercial Movement of Pet Animals Order (2011). A person guilty of such an offence is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or to a fine not exceeding £5,000.

The trade in illegally imported puppies is driven by consumer demand. The public can help stop this trade at source by only buying puppies from reputable dealers and by only buying a puppy that they have seen interacting with its mother. Advice on buying a cat or dog can be found at www.gov.uk/buying-a-cat-or-dog

Q The window for administering the worming tablet has been broadened to five days. But if the tablet is given at the start of the five-day period before travel, a dog could become infected again before travel. There are many other diseases and parasites that can be acquired by a dog travelling overseas on a passport that can be transferred to humans, but it isn't mandatory to protect a dog against sandfly, for example.

A As you note, in January 2012, the treatment window was increased from 24 to 48 hours prior to arrival to 24 to 120 hours. This change was made to address a practical issue faced by pet owners who found themselves unable to find a vet to administer the treatment at weekends and on public holidays, whilst still effectively reducing the risk of introduction of *Echinococcus multilocularis*.

The EU pet travel scheme exists to control the introduction and spread of rabies and the EM tapeworm. However, pets travelling abroad may be exposed to other pests and diseases that aren't present in the UK. Defra's advice is that pet owners should consult their vet prior to travel. Their vet should be able to advise on preventative treatments and other precautions an owner should take to keep their pet safe and healthy, depending on their travel destination.

Q There have been concerns about the recent outbreaks of rabies in Spain and France due to dogs entering from non-EU countries. Are we to expect further outbreaks? Since harmonisation, countries like Australia and NZ have changed the way they treat UK dogs. Previously, we had the status of a rabies-free country; now we are seen as a greater risk, meaning UK puppies cannot enter Australia until they are at least nine months old and still have to go into quarantine.

A A risk assessment carried out prior to harmonisation concluded that although the risk of a rabies incursion would increase, it would remain very low. It is also worth noting that levels of rabies have declined significantly within the EU over the last 20 years and have fallen by over 60 per cent in the countries that make up the EU today since the data for the risk assessment was collected in 2009.

As you say, the recent cases of rabies reported in Spain and France were the result of pets illegally brought into the EU from higher-risk third countries, rather than as a consequence of pets moving from one EU country to another. ★

Advertorial



Weather the storm – be prepared for the winter moult!

FURminator launches its limited-edition deShedding tool in time for the seasonal shed

Unwanted, loose hair is one of the most complained about problems for dog owners. This may be a difficulty over the next few weeks in particular, as your dog is shedding his lighter summer coat to make place for a protective winter coat for the colder months. This inevitably leads to excess hair being widely distributed around the home, which can be both frustrating and unsightly.

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*Independent Market Research Studies, 2012

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(Hettie's picture forms part of a charity exhibition to raise awareness of The Bay Tree Rescue, Cyprus. Visit the Facebook page to find out more)

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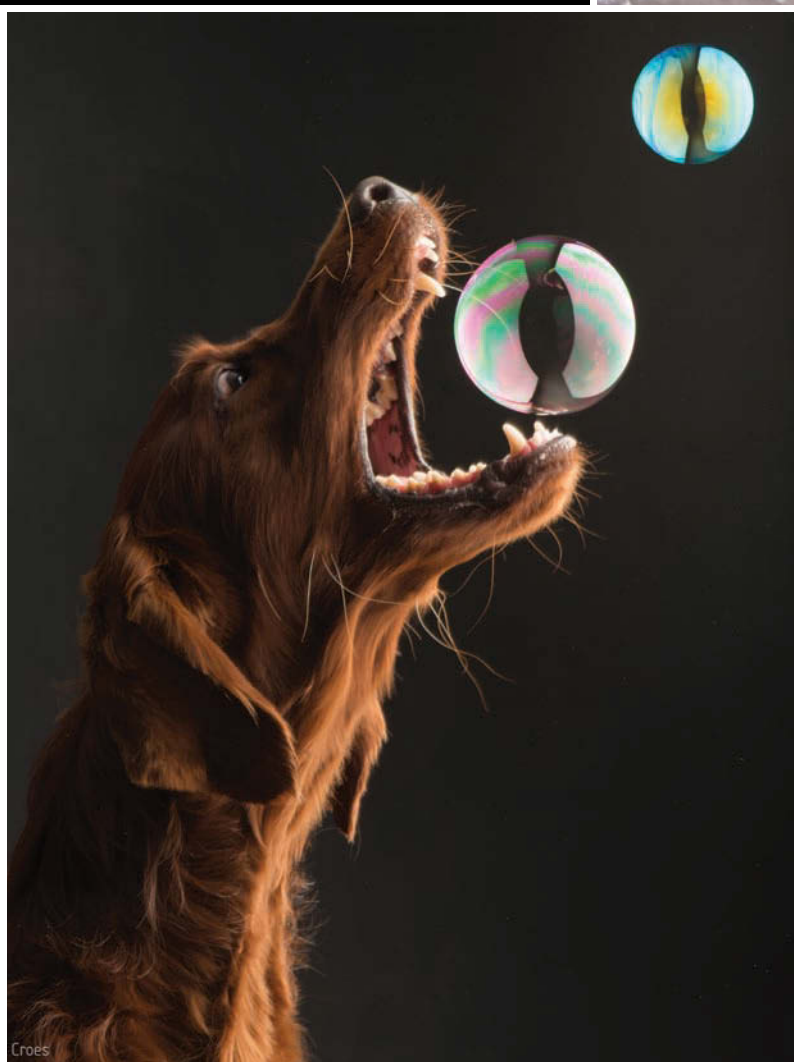
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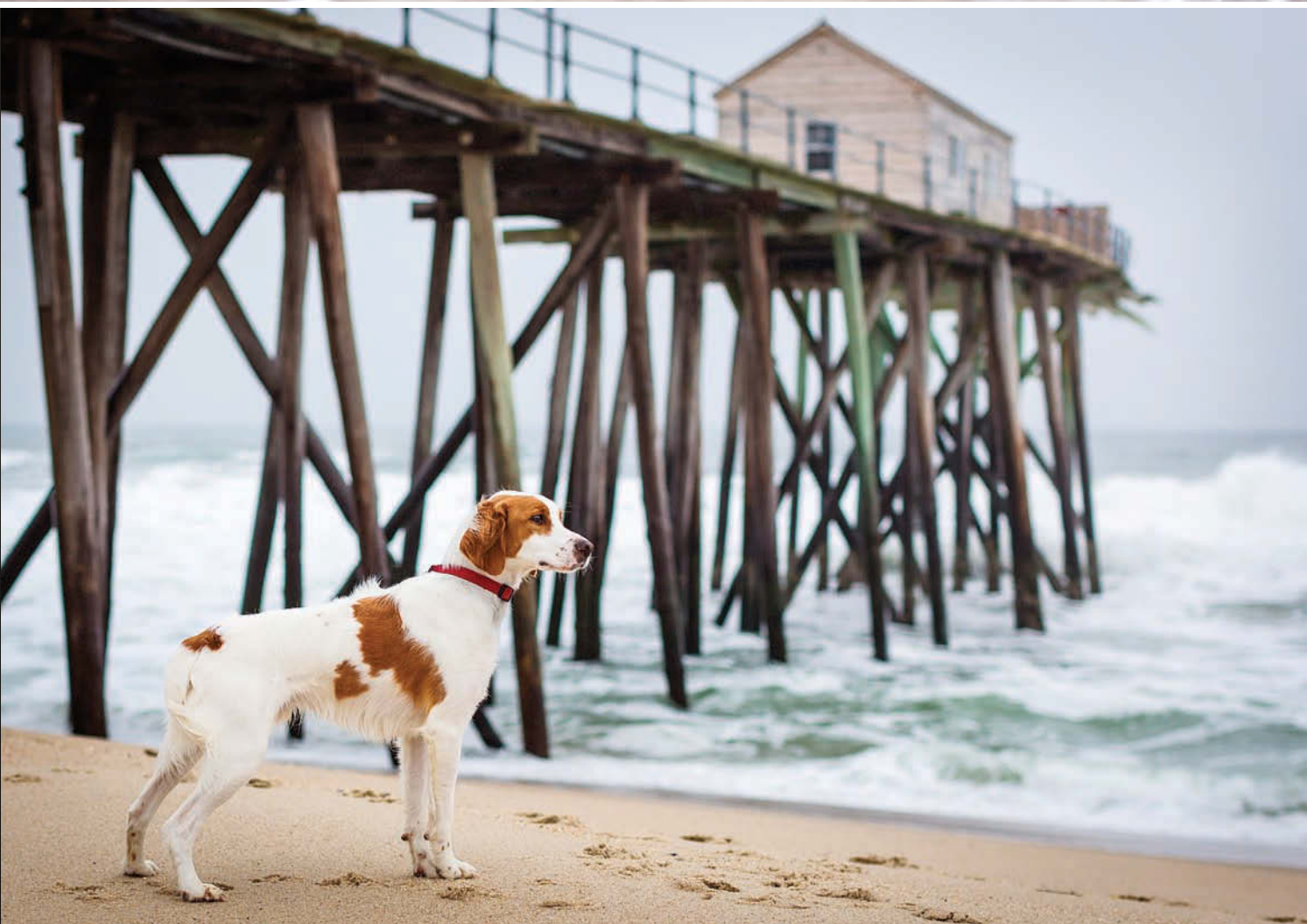


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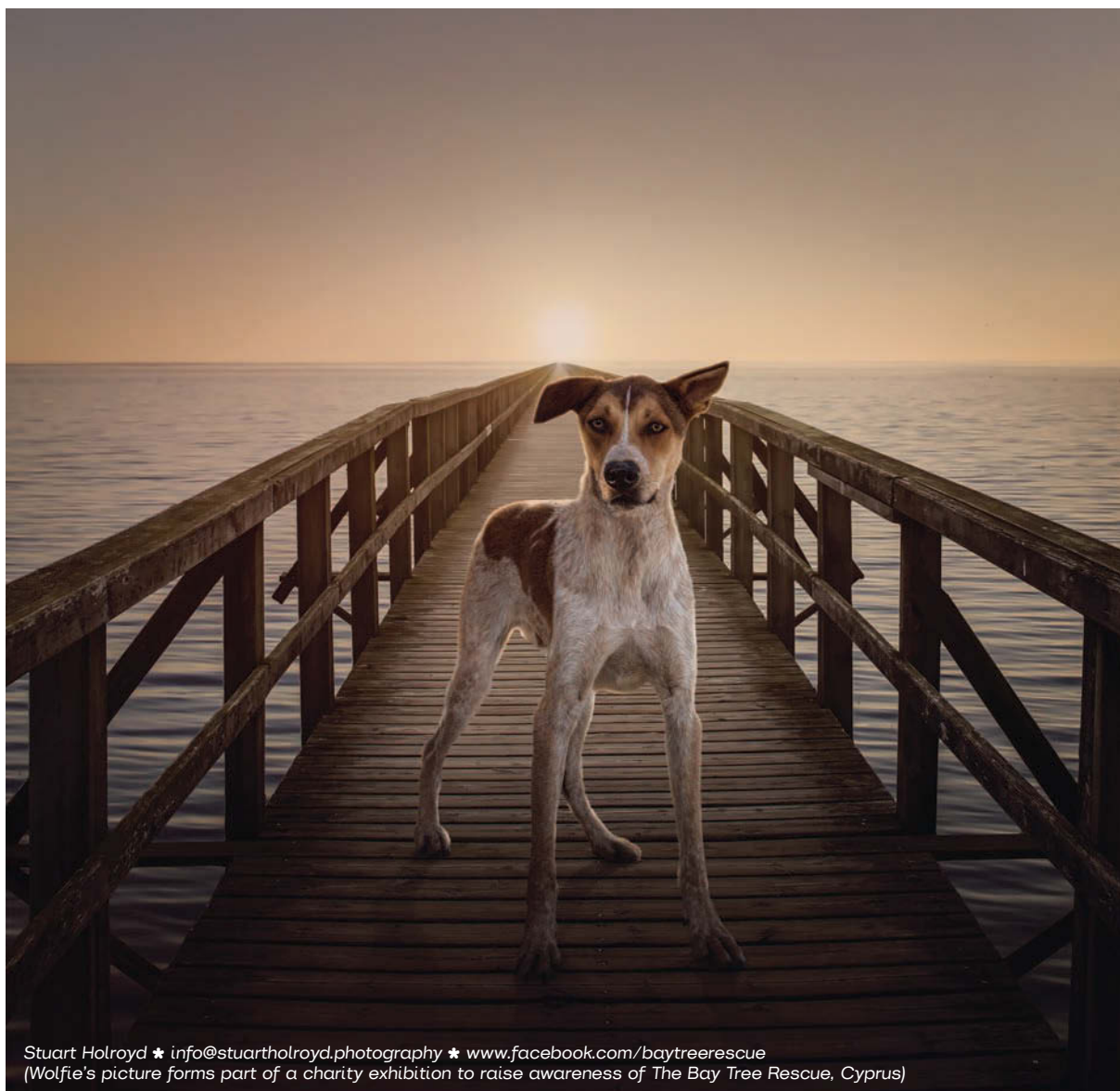


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(Wolfie's picture forms part of a charity exhibition to raise awareness of The Bay Tree Rescue, Cyprus)

Do you have a problem you'd like answered by an expert? Or do you want advice from someone with personal experience of the issue? Email question@dogstodaymagazine.co.uk



Quick Question

Problem

Recently, a French Bulldog was fatally injured by two larger dogs in the back of a dog walker's van. In another incident, a dog was killed by a large number of dogs being walked by one person. The commercial dog walking industry has grown massively in the past few years, but dog walkers do not seem to be tightly regulated.

Question

How many dogs is too many? What regulations must dog walkers follow, if any? Is there insurance they should take out? Are there any professional qualifications that dog walkers could acquire? Are there any regulatory bodies for dog walkers that want to stand apart from those who may be cashing in and cutting corners?

Expert advice

Becky Thwaites, Blue Cross, answers...

Currently, restrictions on walking multiple dogs vary depending on the local authority. We would like to see a more consistent approach to commercial dog walking across the UK – particularly for all walkers to have at least a basic level of dog training skills to ensure off-lead dogs will always come back when called and that walkers are always responsible for the behaviour of the dogs in their care and clear up after them – as we would like to see with all dog owners.

My insurance as a dog walker and animal service provider only covers me for six dogs at a time, but I see other dog walkers with up to 10 dogs at once.

Personally, if I'm working alone, I only take four dogs per walk, otherwise I can't claim to be in full control, and even picking up poo can become problematic. I only ever have one dog off-leash at a time when walking alone. There are too many walkers who run a 'stuff 'em in a van, let them run riot' operation, and I'd welcome any legislation that brought an end to this.

Basic safety is often overlooked; I would never put two dogs who weren't from the same household loose in a car, although it seems to be standard practice.

I also draw up contracts, and was shocked when I learnt that this doesn't seem to be standard practice.

Kelly Basford

I may never be a rich dog walker, but I walk one at a time and still carry insurance. Even though I thoroughly interview clients and meet dogs prior to our first walk, not all clients are completely honest about their dogs' temperament. Whenever I discover aggression issues, I discontinue service. I don't play that game – too risky.

Tracee Roberts Sule

I think three or four is plenty at one time off-lead. If they are very small breeds, then perhaps more if on a lead. You cannot possibly watch more than that for poo. I usually only take three of my own at a time and stagger when they are let off the lead at the start of my walk, so I can pick up poo.

Jane Johnson

My insurance covers me for six dogs. I have four dogs myself and will walk them with two client dogs who are very well behaved. I occasionally walk six, but they are all small (the biggest being 13kg) and I've been walking all of them for a long time, so know them well. I'm a trainer and a canine first-aider and I think insurance and first-aid should be mandatory.

I would never transport unrelated dogs in the same crate. My policy is one crate per home. There are two walkers near me who take 12 dogs between them. Several are very large, one is muzzled and on-lead, and they take two young children with them!

Carrie-Anne Selwyn

I'm a professional dog walker. I have comprehensive professional insurance, a strict limit of six dogs on any walk, a police disclosure check and a customised van with separate crates and air conditioning. This is the minimum I would expect from a professional.

Our council also runs a professional approval scheme, meaning that dog walkers with this accreditation all adhere to good practices and manage their businesses well. If they don't, they lose the approval. If this scheme was rolled out countrywide, I'm sure there would be a reduction in the cowboy dog walkers.

Ross Beveridge

I have my own dog walking business that I set up after training in canine communication and working with dogs for five years.

I never walk more than four at a time and I only walk those four in a quiet area where no other dogs or people are around. I am fully insured. I know each of my dogs inside out and never put them in situations that they don't like. If I see other dogs on leads, mine go on leads. You need to know everything possible about canine behaviour and body language before even thinking about doing this job.

First and foremost for me is the dog's welfare and happiness. The 'job' element of it comes second. Sadly, some see it as a quick, easy buck and the dogs suffer. I would welcome the industry being regulated to ensure everyone who walks dogs is doing it because they love dogs, and not just money.

Karen Read

What's on

Thursday 13 November

What: Wood Green is 90 this November! To celebrate, the charity is holding a glittering 1920s-themed gala dinner.

Where: Wood Green, Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire, PE29 2NH

Time: 6.30pm

Cost: £65 per person; black-tie/1920s dress is optional

Contact: Book online at <https://event.bookitbee.com/992/wood-greens-90th-anniversary-gala-dinner>

Saturday 22 November

What: Blue Cross Tiverton's Christmas fair, with homemade cakes, Christmas gifts and decorations, a raffle, games, refreshments and pet goods.

Where: Willand Village Hall, Gable Road, Willand, EX15 2PL

Time: 11am to 2pm

Cost: Free, but donations welcome

Contact: 0300 777 1560 or email tiverton@bluecross.org.uk

Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 November

What: Christmas fair

Where: Dogs Trust Essex, Nevendon Road, Wickford, Essex, SS12 0FH

Time: 10am to 3pm

Cost: £2 per adult; children and dogs free

Contact: 01268 535050

Sunday 30 November

What: Christmas fair

Where: Dogs Trust Shoreham, Brighton Road, Shoreham by Sea, West Sussex, BN43 5LT

Time: 11am to 1pm

Cost: £1 per adult; children, OAPs and dogs free

Contact: 01273 452576

Sunday 30 November

What: Christmas fair

Where: Dogs Trust Shrewsbury, Roden Lane Farm, Telford, Shropshire, TF6 6BP

Time: 11am to 4pm

Cost: Free

Contact: 01952 770225

Continued overleaf >



Dog Days...



I am a dog walker. I walk dogs singly unless the family has two dogs, and then I will walk them both together. I do not walk unrelated dogs together.

I have qualifications in canine first-aid, dog grooming, and basic canine behaviour. I have worked as a vet nurse assistant and in a boarding kennels, but some people start up walking businesses with no experience.

Dogs in vehicles should be kept separate because cages are confined spaces. I think it should be one dog per cage, or, if not caged, one dog per vehicle unless they are related – and then at most it should be two dogs to the vehicle.

Bethan Victoria George

We need to ensure that private owners don't get caught up in any number-restrictive legislation. I currently walk seven absolutely safely, as they are very well trained and I am lucky enough to walk in a huge area where I very rarely meet anyone else. I would hate that restrictions on people who cause problems would impact on what I can do with my own dogs.

Walking your own, so long as you have full control, is very different to walking a number of dogs that belong to someone else – you don't have the same relationship with them, and they may not be as well trained.

Jackie Bromwich

I think a maximum of two dogs when they are professionally walked, and no more than three per person, even if they are pets.

Dogs will act in a pack at times and the amount of dogs walked should be within the capability of control for whoever is handling them.

Jay Boden

You should have public liability insurance if you are a paid dog walker. This protects in the event of dog bites to people and any injuries to other animals.

Diane Widger

The industry certainly needs more regulation. I do think, however, that a lot of the blame can also be put at the client's door. Whether we regulate the industry or not, there are always going to be owners looking for the cheapest service, regardless of any thought to regulation or safety.

Like everything in life, there are the walkers who would not wish to be registered or regulated for obvious reasons. These are the ones who chuck the dogs all together and 'let them sort it out'.

Carole Leighton



At our dog walking company, we generally say no more than four dogs, but that would depend on the dog; we wouldn't walk four reactive dogs together. The most important part of dog walking is understanding the dogs and being able to read their body language to prevent things happening before they do. We are qualified trainers and pass our knowledge on to our walkers.

We have a Defra licence, but no one has ever checked us or seen how we transport the dogs. All the dogs we have are crated in the van.

Gavin Muldoon,
IMDT

Dog walker insurance will cover up to six dogs per walk, but most councils stipulate the number of dogs that can be walked at any one time. My own council says no more than four. Dog control orders vary from council to council.

I too am a dog walker and all my clients' dogs travel in cages or crates that are custom fitted for my car. There are no laws for safe travel, but the Highway Code stipulates that dogs should travel safely, and, in my opinion, this does not mean loose in the boot!

Vicky Hays

My insurance states no more than six dogs, but I only walk four at a time. If dogs are not keen on other dogs, I walk them by themselves.

I collect only the dogs I will walk for that hour, and then return them and pick up the next ones so that no dog is left in the vehicle.

I think all dog walkers should have insurance. I also have documents that my client has to sign, giving vet information etc.

Diane Jeffs

The potential restriction of four dogs is a power that local authorities can enact under dog control orders should they choose to; it's not the law.

I think the key to how many dogs a person should walk is the person. Some people can't control a geriatric Labrador while others can control half a dozen Springer pups with one word!

Katy Carmichael

Ask the Medivet...

Hello! I'm Aimee Baird and I'm pleased to be working with *Dogs Today* on a monthly column answering your veterinary questions. Please email your queries to medivet@dogstodaymagazine.co.uk

MEET THE VET: Aimee Baird qualified as a veterinary surgeon at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Science in Edinburgh. She lives in Battersea, and is a partner at Medivet's 24-Hour Continuous Care Centre in Richmond. Aimee has particular interests in surgery, internal medicine and ultrasound.



My dog has a condition called 'collie nose' (discoid lupus erythematosus, or solar nasal dermatitis). We have been giving her two Oxycare 250mg and five Prednicare 5mg every day since June, but to no avail. We try to keep her out of the sun, and she licks anything put on her nose, so do you have any other ideas?

Coincidentally, a friend's Golden Retriever has a condition called 'snow nose', where the pigment is lost over the winter and returns in the warmer months. Is this a symptom of an underlying problem?

Discoid lupus erythematosus (DLE) is an uncommon autoimmune skin disease, principally affecting the nose. The cause is unknown and it presents as loss of pigment, redness and scaling. This can progress to erosions and ulcerations. The lips, ears, around the eyes and lower limbs may also be affected.

The name 'collie nose' is used because Border Collies (along with other collie breeds, German Shepherds, Shetland Sheepdogs, Siberian Huskies, Brittany's and German Shorthaired Pointers) are predisposed to suffer from this condition. It is essential the condition is diagnosed with biopsies that are sent for histopathology, as a misdiagnosis can result in the wrong treatment being given.

The treatment your vet has given is part of a standard treatment protocol for DLE. Avoiding the sun is essential, as the condition is exacerbated by UV light. Trying to keep your dog indoors between 8am and 5pm, especially in summer, and using a high-factor sun cream will help. I appreciate that creams are easily licked off, though, so make sure you go for something safe for dogs.

In addition to the steroids (Prednicare), other stronger immunosuppressive drugs can be used. It is reported that vitamin E and essential fatty acids can also help, so discuss these options with your vet.

'Snow nose' is the loss of pigment of the nose during the winter months. This is purely a cosmetic problem. However, nasal depigmentation can be an initial presenting sign for a number of diseases, so it is best to get it checked out by a vet.

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For several years, Victoria Stilwell has been 'the supernanny' to many naughty doggies on our TV screens - rehabilitating those with various behavioural and training difficulties and helping families to control - and enjoy - their four-legged friends.

Visit Victoria's website at www.positively.com for news about her work and details of her books: *It's Me or the Dog* and *Fat Dog Slim*.



Rescuing more than 350 dogs from a puppy farm, Victoria recounts the horror endured by many thousands of other dogs across the world

This past July, I was one of the first to arrive at the scene of a massive puppy farm bust near Atlanta, Georgia. Working alongside officers from the Cherokee County marshal's office and veterinarians and staff from the county animal shelter, we set out to liberate 357 dogs and puppies from a lifetime of suffering and neglect. The puppy farm belonged to a woman who was in the midst of court proceedings for many offences gained while operating her breeding facility.

The puppy farm had been in business for 40 years, but few people knew it was there. Situated in a densely wooded area at the end of a dirt track just half a mile from a busy

country road, it was well hidden. The nearest neighbours were a mile away and no one ever reported any barking or saw anything suspicious. The only entrance to the puppy farm was a track blocked with a single chain and a sign that said: God is watching you.



I could smell the dogs before I saw them. The stench of faeces, disease and fear was overwhelming; as I got closer, I could see the sad, confused faces of hundreds of dogs in wire cages, looking at me as I approached. It was one of the most heartbreaking sights I have ever witnessed.

The dogs were surprisingly quiet until I got closer - then all hell broke loose. Dogs of all ages jumped on to the wire walls of their cages, some trying desperately to get my attention, others warning me to stay away. Fights broke out as frustration grew. Dogs barked, paced and howled as they clambered over their cage mates in an attempt to gain or avoid contact. Others just stayed frozen at the back of their cages, barely able to look at me as I walked by.

There was every conceivable breed, including Siberian Huskies, Cocker Spaniels, Pomeranians, Chihuahuas, Basset Hounds, Yorkshire Terriers and Shih Tzu. Business for this particular

Illustrations:
Kevin Brockbank

breeding facility was thriving.

It was clear to me that many of the breeding bitches and sires had never left their cages and had experienced minimal human contact. All the dogs and puppies lived in cages on wire floors so that any excrement fell through the mesh on to the ground below. A mound of faeces remained under each cage and was either covered in toxic lye or had flies and maggots crawling over it.



The whelping areas fared no better. Bits of carpet, saturated in urine and faeces, were the only place of comfort for newborn pups. Older pups fought to sleep in their water bowls, a much more comfortable place to lie down than a wire floor.

Once we had set up our processing areas, we began the laborious task of photographing each cage and identifying every dog and pup as we removed them and put them into crates for transportation to the shelter.

I was the first to lay my hands on many of them and while the younger puppies accepted my approach, the older pups and dogs were terrified. It was obvious that the limited human contact they'd had in the past was not a positive experience.

I could not spend any time trying to gain the dogs' trust and found myself literally grabbing and pulling terrified animals out of the only home they had ever known, their bodies tensing as I made contact. Some pups were so terrified, they wrapped their overgrown nails around the wire to stop me from taking them away. They were paralysed with fear and among the most severely shut-down dogs I had ever seen.

It was an awful feeling, knowing that I was just another scary human reaching for them, but I had to operate quickly and without emotion to get them to a better place. What surprised me even more was that even though some of the mothers attempted to bite me as I reached in to get

them and their pups, most adults did not even know how to defend themselves. These dogs were so shut-down, they did not even know how to bite.

We worked for many hours until all the animals were removed from the property and placed in the safe custody of the Cherokee County animal shelter, where they were to remain until appropriate homes could be found. In the meantime, it was a relief to know that all the dogs now had access to the highest quality of care from shelter staff and volunteers until new homes could be found for them.



It would be a long road ahead for some of them, in terms of socialisation and learning to trust people for the first time in their short lives, but I knew that with time and patience, most would make it.

It is well known that puppy farms breed pups for bulk and profit with no concern for their health or temperament.

Many puppies sold from these places have severe health conditions and those that do not die within a few weeks of purchase can experience health problems throughout their lives. The financial cost to families is overwhelming and many puppy farm pups end up being euthanased or dumped into the shelter system.

There is no genetic screening when breeding pups in these facilities and virtually no veterinary care. There are many documented cases of puppies being sold with serious diseases that can also be transferred to humans. These include intestinal parasites, such as giardia, and, in the United States, rabies. Children are at particular risk if they come in contact with such diseases. Parvovirus, canine brucellosis, and canine distemper virus are also commonly found in puppy farms.

Life for the inhabitants of these facilities is very stressful – and stress suppresses the immune system, making the dogs more susceptible to



disease. Confinement and overcrowding allow disease to spread quickly, and dirty food and water harbour micro-organisms that also cause sickness. Wire flooring causes injuries that are rarely treated. I saw many dogs with terrible skin conditions, rotten teeth, ingrown toenails, eye infections, respiratory infections, mastitis and fleas.



While pups and adult dogs suffer physically, the emotional damage of living in such an environment can last a lifetime. Puppies have little contact or experience of other dogs, people or environments in the vital weeks when mental and physical development is so crucial. These puppies are removed from their mothers and sold too young (four to seven weeks old) to maximise profits. It is vital that puppies are with their mothers and their littermates until at least eight weeks of age because they learn a lot about social interaction from their

littermates and valuable life lessons from their mothers.

Bitches are used as breeding machines and kept in horrific conditions their entire lives. Most bitches never see the light of day or feel grass under their feet. Some are so sick and depressed they are unable to give the guidance their puppies need. Studies show that prenatal maternal stress may induce long-lasting alterations in brain structures and functions of the offspring. Because of this, many adult dogs and puppies that come from puppy farms are emotionally numb and do not know how to play with toys, other dogs or humans. Most of the mothers we saw were too exhausted to interact appropriately with their pups.

Male dogs used for breeding are kept in similar conditions. When adult dogs from both sexes are no longer producing puppies, they are often drowned, shot, starved, gassed or electrocuted. Puppy farmers rarely go to the expense of humane euthanasia. It is very normal to find mass graves near puppy farms, filled with pups and adult dogs that have succumbed to illness or outlived their usefulness. As I pulled each dog out of their misery, I could see the officers walking around the property, surveying the land and looking for potential grave sites.

A study published in *The Journal of American Veterinary Medicine* in May 2013 by James Duffy, Deborah Duffy and Frank

McMillan, proves that puppies purchased from puppy farms show an increased prevalence for behavioural problems as adults. The study, motivated by findings in a 2011 study by the same authors, shows there are greater psychological problems in adult dogs rescued from commercial breeding facilities than pet dogs that are raised in home environments and suggests that turbulent early lives of dogs in commercial breeding facilities might be the reason for future stress-related behaviours.

The extent of the abnormalities in dogs sourced from large-scale breeders is dramatic. Pups from puppy farms show an increased risk of aggression toward their owners and other dogs, as well as a greater chance of escaping, roaming and running away. They are more likely to be fearful, anxious, depressed and less able to cope with challenges and novelty in domestic life. The 2011 study was the first scientific evidence that dogs confined in puppy mills for breeding purposes demonstrated impaired mental health.

I did not need a study to prove to me what trauma the dogs I was rescuing were living in. I saw a wide range of stress-induced behaviours in most of the dogs observed. Fear behaviours such as barking, lunging, lip licking, pacing, cowering, trembling, growling and complete shut-down, where dogs just stood or lay motionless, were prevalent. Dogs also showed compulsive-type behaviours,

such as tail chasing, spinning and pacing. Aggression towards cage mates was frequent.

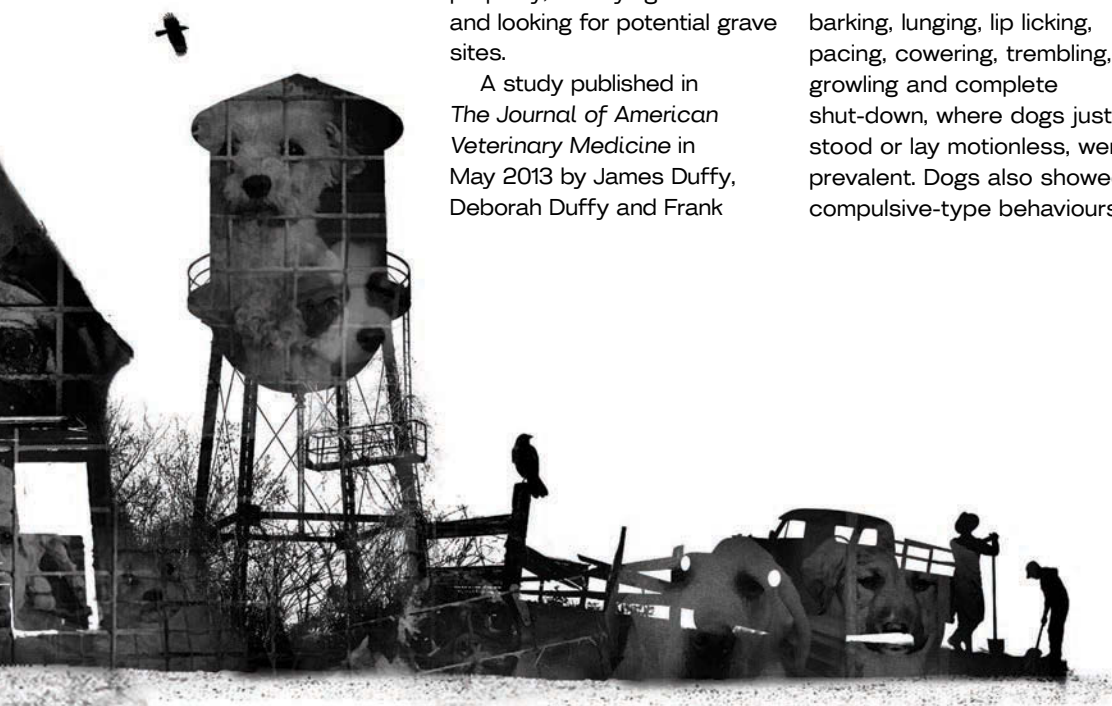
People rarely buy directly from puppy farms and seldom realise that when they get a pup from a pet shop, boot sale, flea market, over the internet or in the local paper, that the puppy is from such a facility. People who buy dogs from sources other than reputable shelters, where they are unable to see what the breeding environment is like and where there is no opportunity to meet the mother, are buying a potential liability. A lot of information can be gained just by watching a mother dog interacting with her puppies.



Puppy farmers, however, often hire 'middlemen' to sell their puppies. These men and women might pose as rescue workers, run unlicensed 'shelters' or even create a homely environment where the buyer can view the pups with their mother, only for the mother to be returned to the mill once the puppies are sold. People are often conned by these middlemen and 'halfway houses' even when they think they are doing everything to avoid purchasing a puppy that has been bred in a farm.

My experience of rescuing puppies and dogs from mass breeding facilities only strengthens my resolve to do what I can to shut these places down. I see too many clients who have purchased pups from pet stores or backyard breeders and are now living with the consequences.

But at least one more puppy farm in Georgia has been closed down, and the rescued dogs and puppies are showing positive progress in their new temporary home. A film of their rescue and development can soon be seen at www.positively.com as well as their journey to a better life, which has now truly begun. ★



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Dear Santa Paws...

Richard Allport runs a large vet referral centre in Hertfordshire, offering a range of natural therapies for pets, including homoeopathy, herbal medicine, acupuncture and healing.

For information on how natural therapies can help your pet, or for details of consultations at Richard's referral centre visit www.naturalmedicinecentre.co.uk



What would your dog really want in his Christmas stocking?

It's been a long time since I hung up a Christmas stocking for Santa to fill. Probably (OK, definitely) more than 50 years.

I don't suppose the contents of stockings these days contain the same as when I was an excited eight-year-old. If I remember correctly, there was an orange wrapped in silver foil, some chocolate money wrapped in gold foil, a dinky toy, a pencil sharpener, a magnet, two small bars of Cadbury's Dairy Milk chocolate, a yoyo, a cap gun and some balloons. Well, we were easily pleased in those days – it was only a few years since the end of post-war rationing, after all.

What would I now ask for if Santa gave me a request list to complete for him, I wonder?

I wouldn't mind another cap gun, to be honest; they really are great fun. But supposing dogs also believe in Father Christmas... What would they ask for?

Believe it or not, I have managed to intercept the wish-list of a dog sent to Santa Claus. I had to clean off the paw prints and slobber first, but I now present to you:

A Dog's Request to Father Christmas

Dear Father Christmas,

I am sending this list of what my friends and I would like for the year ahead. We don't want fancy toys or games; we just want you to ask our human companions to treat us a little more considerably. We love them dearly, but they can be a bit dense at times. Well, here goes...

Illustrations:
Kevin Brockbank



1. More walks, please. Please, please, please! More, more, more!

The people we live with are always so busy. We do enjoy our half an hour in the morning and evening, but we'd love longer. We'd also love to go to different places and we'd particularly love being given longer to sniff at each new spot on the walk. You humans don't realise the joy of sniffing – how much information and interest we get from every sniff and snuffle.

And please let us run off the lead at least some of the time. And without pushing it, could you find time to throw us a ball? Oh, and do talk to us, rather than being fixated with your mobile phones all the time.

And on the subject of walks, if you must put our poo in bags (which we understand is a good thing, though we're not quite sure why), please don't leave the bags behind in the hedge, or hanging from a fence or a tree.

2. Food. Yes, it's true most of us wolf down whatever is in front of us, but that's just because we're hungry and the rest of the day is boring. I mean to say, apart from a less than satisfying walk (see above), what else is there in life for us? But that doesn't mean you should give us the cheapest, nastiest kibble you can find in the pet shop.

We're carnivores, for goodness' sake! We might be some distance on from our ancestral

wolf, but we still have a digestive tract and metabolism that does best from real food – proper meat and veg, raw bones and offal. And if you can't bear to give us real food, at least give us a high-quality, protein-rich, wheat-free, low-carbohydrate diet – I promise you'll have lower vet bills if you do.

3. The vet. Just don't go there. Literally! OK, maybe it is good for us to visit sometimes, but you know we hate going – well, most of us do, though there is the occasional oddball canine who will do anything for treats. So do make sure our journey is really necessary.

If we have a healthy, nutritious diet, you'll need to take us less (see above). If we are well exercised, ditto. And keep an eye on us yourselves and keep us away from danger. Don't let us run into the road or dive into lakes full of blue-green algae in the summer, and don't leave your prescription drugs and painkillers lying around for us to find. At Christmas especially, don't let us eat chocolate, grapes, raisins (no Christmas pud for us!), macadamia nuts or cooked turkey carcass (raw bones are fine, but not the cooked, splintery bones of a leftover turkey).

And while we're on the subject of the vet, we do sort of realise that things like vaccinations can be good for us, but can you please ask our folks to check if a shot every year is really necessary, and if early neutering is such a good idea? (One of my friends, who is quite brainy, says there is evidence that early neutering increases our risk of some cancers and also of joint problems like cruciate disease, whatever that is).

4. Treats. Oh, come on, it is Christmas. But make them healthy treats, not full of sugars, carbohydrates, colourings, flavourings or other additives. Because although we love our treats, we don't want to get fat and slow and out of breath and diabetic. Which is what happens if we get fed too many unhealthy treats and a diet full of carbohydrates.

5. Finally... toys. Yes, I know I said we didn't want lots of toys and games, but if you could find time after talking to our folks about numbers one to four above, to dig out a squeaky toy for each of us, now that really would make Christmas complete.

Thank you in advance, and if you get let down by your elves, I'm sure me and my pals can help you out.



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Dr David Sands BSC PhD CFBA

A Guide Dog For The Thick – a book about Terry's Bull Terrier adventures with Morris, is now available from Calm Productions (www.calmproductions.com)



His nibs

Terry recalls the time Morris's mountainous appetite resulted in him being struck off his pen-pal list...

Everyone knows that whenever Morris does one of his 'drastics', I make excuses for him. I will also invent alibis for him, flat-out lie for him, and, if all else fails and I can't blame my children, I'll even take responsibility for him. Well, not this time, I won't. This time, Morris has struck me a mortal blow.

A blow so bad, so deeply wounding and so monumentally upsetting that it will be weeks before I'm able to look into Morris's piggy eyes without snarling at him. Me and Morris ain't mates no more. I'm not speaking to him and I don't care if he ever plonks his scabby chops on my knee ever again... ever. And even

if he does, I'm not doing the scratch-me-at-the-bottom-of-my-ears number.

We're finished. He's done the one thing I can't forgive him for. He's chewed up my matching set of Mont Blanc pens. To be precise, he mangled two pens, a propelling pencil and the presentation case. The evil, spiteful, rotten, farty git.



I loved those pens. No, really, I genuinely adored them, and I'm the least materialistic human on this earth. As far as being materialistic goes, I make Gandhi look like Ivana Trump, yet those precious, blessed, divine conveyors

of the written word had me totally in their thrall. It was love at first write and we were an item from the day my father-in-law gave them to me.

Wherever I went, my Mont Blancs went with me. I signed my mortgage papers with the fountain pen, I wrote out our first child's first birthday card (including a desperately funny poem, which he completely failed to appreciate) with the rollerball, and I once defended my entire family from a kamikaze bumblebee, using only my courage and that now deceased propelling pencil. Will my life ever be the same again? I think not.

Herself discovered the

tragedy when she was hauling out Morris's stash of stolen goodies from his cave beneath the posh desk in my office. This is Morris's grotto, where he hordes anything he can swipe that smells of me.



of me and must have been irresistible to Morris's whiffly hooter. They certainly didn't put up much resistance to his teeth and by the time I was allowed to view the remains, my cherished pens resembled something sketched by Dali... when he was seriously drunk.

being counterfeit and dared compare them to a monstrous set of fakes he'd dredged from some shifty street trader in New York. My pens and I soon sorted him out, and we exposed his dodgy Rolex while we were about it, too.

How about that time when they were openly admired by Darth Vader, then? Oh yes. Darth, well it was Dave Prowse who played him, actually, said that my pens were 'very nice', when I interviewed him once. I didn't prompt him or anything; he just said it. Dave was also the Green Cross Code bloke, and he's been in loads of films and does tons of autographs, so he's bound to know a good pen when he sees one, and he was looking at three of them when he gazed so admiringly upon my Mont Blancs. Bless. Now I'm definitely crying.



Morris knows that I'm upset. Thick he may be, but he reads body language like Herself reads my credit card receipts – instantly and with unfailing accuracy. I know he knows, because he hasn't done a single 'drastic' since he murdered my Mont Blancs. Herself's trying to persuade me that the sacrifice of my pen friends may be worth it, if Morris continues to behave himself. I say no, no and thrice no. That's a 'no' for each of my ex-pens. Then, I look hurt and bereaved and go to the garden, where I can stare wistfully and Herself can see me doing it and feel sorry for me. I think it's only proper.



I'd better go now. This subject is even closer to my heart than I realised and my shining eyes and snotty nose are in need of a hanky – which I don't have because Morris has nicked them all and dragged them off to his grotto, where my Mont Blancs met their maker. I'm very, very sad. But I guess you knew that already. Sniff. ★

They certainly didn't put up much resistance to his teeth and by the time I was allowed to view the remains, my cherished pens resembled something sketched by Dali... when he was seriously drunk



The magnitude of what Herself saw lying among the usual nest of my socks, underpants and bits of dental floss stirred even her grating block of heart-substitute granite. For the first time in her entire career as Morris's mortal enemy, Herself tried to defend him.

She knew better than to diminish the seriousness of what Morris had done to my Mont Blancs. He'd climbed on to my posh desk, rootled through my open briefcase, extracted my sacred presentation case, and retired to his grotto to obliterate my pen set at his leisure. After all we've been through together, those pens positively reek



So, that's my Mont Blancs gone, then. No more flourishing them at meetings. No more snapping shut the lid of their cool case to attract the attention of those forced to pilot Parkers or scratch about with a Sheaffer, or, heaven forbid, blob-up big style with a Bic. I've Monted my last Blanc, and there's no way back. They're gone. He's eaten them. He's pooped them. They've been bagged, binned and burned. I think I'm going to cry now.

I'll remember the good times, of course. When that lout from the advertising department accused my Mont Blancs of

Illustrations:
Kevin Brockbank

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Wedding bows

We married on 28 September and our guests included 38 dogs, including our own six. I run a club, Bliss Gate Dog Training, and all these dogs attend one of my classes.

Samantha Ross, by email

We hope you enjoy the print as a belated wedding present from us!



The writer of our Star Letter will win a signed limited edition print of their choice by Kevin Brockbank worth £50. Choose from *A Good Read*, or *The Dog Fight*.

To order any of these prints, visit www.dogstodaymagazine.co.uk/shop.htm

Listen up, Defra!

I completely endorse your excellent article about the changes to the pet passport scheme.

Your thorough research into this existing and still growing problem of mainly eastern European puppy dealers, which is undermining all the work and effort we put into changing quarantine in this country, is firm evidence, which Defra must address.

Returning with our dog from Normandy on more than one occasion we have seen vans with underage puppies parked in the Shuttle check-in car park. On two occasions I have been offered puppies for sale, usually after the dealers have been refused passage on the Shuttle.

Bravo, Beverley – I look forward to the follow-up.

Lady Mary Fretwell OBE

Toxic neighbour

Last year a neighbour complained that our dogs had been barking while we were out. While we had no problem with the complaint itself, we did take issue with the fact that she threatened to poison our dogs if it happened again!

Advice from the police was very unsatisfactory, as pets are classed as property: although causing them harm is an offence, a threat to harm is not. The only thing they could do was to talk to her.

The issue has now been resolved, but it has left me slightly sour – had the threat been towards a child, our neighbour would probably be in prison!

My dogs are my world, and I wish the law took such threats more seriously.

Annabella Krol, by email

My boy, Boris

I thoroughly enjoy the magazine, and thought you might like to see this picture of my Border Terrier-Whippet cross, Boris, aged 14 weeks.

Maggie Seargeant,
Wem, Shropshire



Strange but True!

Words:
**Colin Jeffery
& Paul Dunn**

★ A runaway Poodle turned up six miles away at the home of his owner's mother, Betty Shepherd, although he had never been there before.

Three-year-old Billy had been picked up by a dog warden after disappearing from Paul Shepherd's home in St Osyth, Essex. But Billy escaped from the warden's van, crossed railway tracks and a river before arriving at 45-year-old Paul's mum's home in Great Bentley.

Mum Betty said, "I couldn't believe it when I saw him at the front door. It was amazing."



Photo posed by a model



Access all areas?

While volunteering as a dog boarder for trainee guide dogs, I was asked to leave the Trafford Centre in Manchester because "they only allowed guide dogs with actual blind people" and a large out-of-town Next store because "my dog was intimidating the staff and other customers".

I attach a picture of Wickes the guide dog, who is the gentlest dog with the biggest ears and nose you have ever seen!

Claire Bettley, Chippenham, Wiltshire

Fantastic Foxhounds

I really enjoyed reading about Foxhounds in the October edition. I would just like to add that there is a rescue group dedicated to the breed that has a very informative website at <http://foxhoundwelfareuk.jimdo.com/>

Annette Freeman, London

Sunday's best

A while ago, a few friends arranged to walk our small dogs each Sunday in a nearby country park. Through Facebook the group has expanded rapidly, and there are now more than 80 of us in total, although the average number of walkers is about 30. The dogs have a fantastic time playing safely off-lead, and the humans are able to socialise and meet new people, resulting in a great time for all!

Emma Jones, Neath, Port Talbot

Unhelpful attitude

Earlier this year, I parked next to a small car at our nearest B&Q store. The passenger window was open about a quarter, and two medium-sized dogs were on the back seat. One was really distressed, panting furiously.

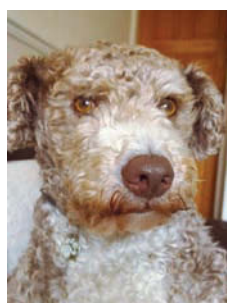
I requested an announcement, asking the driver to return to the car. The assistant came to see and remarked that a window was open. I pointed out that the day was very humid and the dog was obviously in distress. She then agreed to put a call out.

A quarter of an hour later, there had still been no call.

I feel so angry and upset, and am left wondering whether this was because I was in a wheelchair – you get this patronising attitude at times.

Barry O'Connell, Clacton, Essex

We asked B&Q for its response to the matters raised in this letter, but as we go to press a month later, it is still investigating.



Jessie comes home

Early this year in your February issue you featured our lovely Welsh Terrier, Evie, on your *Golden Oldies* page. Unfortunately, we have since had to say our final goodbyes to Evie.

We didn't plan to get another dog for quite some time, but I do believe dogs have a way of finding us!

A few weeks later, I heard of a charity called SOS Animals UK, which rehomes Spanish dogs. We fell in love with Jessie, a lovely little Spanish Water Dog cross, and arranged to bring her home.

Jess was terrified when she first arrived, but, a few months on, she is loving her new life.

Losing Evie was very hard, but I know she would not have wanted her seat on the sofa to remain empty.

Karen Jones, Manchester



★ Jean Templeton of Redhill, Surrey, met her neighbour, Hilda Parks, while shopping in the supermarket and joked about Hilda's tiny Shih Tzu, Mindy Sue.

"When I was going for my newspaper, your dog went for me!"

"You're lucky," replied Hilda, "She certainly won't go for me."

★ Police have launched an appeal for bath towels – to clean up their slobbering squad of Bloodhounds.

Tracker dogs Morse and Sherlock make so much mess because they dribble loads. But the dirty dogs, who play a vital role in the hunt for criminals and missing people, have led to a drain on resources in Jacksonville, Alabama. Now the police dog unit is appealing for any old towels to help them keep their mucky pups dry and dribble-free.

★ Fly-by-night thieves have nicked a parrot that barks like a dog. They snatched Charles Henry from his cage as he 'night-watched' for a store in Birmingham.

Owner John Peters said, "He's very good at imitating things and can bark like a dog after copying my collie, Stanley."

John is offering £500 for the return of the parrot.



Photo posed by a model



Sarah Whitehead's Best behaviour

New Year's Resolutions

Promising yourself that this will be the year you lose weight, go to the gym or stop prevaricating over that pile of paperwork that sits on your desk may be honourable, but is it any fun? Here are some doggie resolutions that you can easily stick to...

Sarah Whitehead is a pet behaviour counsellor who runs puppy socialisation classes, courses in animal behaviour and tackles behaviour problems in the south of England



Resolution 1

I will do some more basic training

If you have been guilty of saying, "That dog is driving me insane!" this year, then this one is for you...

Let's face it: nearly all dogs could do with some more basic training. Time, pressures of work and the difficulty of the breed are all great excuses, but the art of great training is to prevent problems from occurring, rather than reacting to them when they do. Just like taking exercise, getting down to doing some training is much more likely to happen regularly if you and the dog both enjoy it and fit it into a routine. For some people, this means joining forces with others at a class or group session. This can lead to support from others in the group, new doggie friendships and even the opportunity for some human socialisation, too!

To find a good dog training class near you, visit www.apdt.co.uk

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Alternatively, you may prefer simply to spend some 'quality time' with your dog by practising some basic training in your lounge or garden. A great deal can be achieved this way, and it can be particularly good for dogs that are distracted or stressed by the presence of other dogs in close proximity. Obtaining a good dog training book or enrolling on some online lessons can help this process - and can really motivate you to teach your dog basic exercises or tricks at home.

Take a look at my book, *Good Dog!* or visit www.trainyourdogonline.com



Resolution 2 I will play more with my dog!

Playing is at the top of most dogs' Christmas lists - and if you have more than one dog, playing individually with each of them should be an even higher priority. Why dogs love to play so much is a moot scientific point, but the reality is that not only do they enjoy it, they can also gain better manners and an improved relationship with you through doing it.

Playing with our dogs is also very likely to improve our mood - indeed, it's thought that we release some lovely feel-good neurochemicals as a result, so what better way to chase away the January blues?

Do you know your dog's favourite way to play? Does he like playing with toys, or

does he prefer other types of game, such as hide and seek or chasing you around the garden? Thankfully, gone are the days when behaviourists used to tell owners not to play tug games with their dogs. As long as you can regain possession of the toy quickly and calmly without a struggle, tug games are fine - and can actually help to increase your general control.

Sadly, some owners resist playing with their dogs because it gets them over-excited. If yours is one of these, find ways of playing and interacting with your dog that do not involve physical contact. Hunt the food treat or teaching your dog to put his toys away into a box or basket are useful 'distancing' tasks that are still enjoyable and will fulfil your dog's need to play.

Resolution 3 I will train something funny - to perfection

Most of us are pretty lazy about the accuracy of our dog's responses to our cues, and very few of us actually put the polish on tricks or other exercises, which could be even more rewarding if they were trained to perfection.

To train a task to completion, the dog needs to have passed through a number of stages: learning what is required to get the reward, learning to do it when asked, and then learning only to do it when you give the cue. Interestingly, very few dogs manage that last stage, and this is usually because owners are so thrilled that the dog is offering his best 'party piece' at all times of the day and night, that they

continue to reward it, even if they didn't ask for it in the first place.

So, here's a list of my personal favourite tricks - mostly because they really make me laugh...

Bring me the remote control

Ah, the joy of a dog that will hop off the sofa and fetch the remote control when you've left it on the coffee table. A good retrieve is necessary for this one - and the dog must know that rewards are available for bringing it to you rather than dashing off in the opposite direction! >>>



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Cock your leg

A cute trick and one that also informs the dog that he or she has an independent back end that he can move at will... the dog is clicked and rewarded for lifting one back leg – firstly by tiny amounts, and then all the way into a full leg-cocking pose. Obviously, though, the action is 'fake'!

Take my socks off!

I taught my little Jack Rat-collie cross this as a joke. Thankfully, she is very careful with her teeth and has never nipped my toes when removing my socks! Be aware, though, that this trick must be under 'cue control'. It's hard to explain to visitors otherwise...

Resolution 4

I will try a new activity with my dog

Most people have heard about the common dog sports, such as agility, flyball and obedience, but few owners consider trying them with their own pet dogs, believing that it requires a specific breed or type to be able to take part.

Certainly, it does take considerable time and dedication to compete at a top level in these fields, but many pet dog clubs now cater for those owners who would simply like to have a taster, or want to try something new.

Rally, mini-agility, all-breed racing, and pet dog scent-work are all fun – and don't

necessarily need a high level of training to give it a try. Treibball (where dogs herd giant balls), dock-dog events (dogs jump into water from a dock) and Frisbee-catching suit dogs of varying breeds and motivation. Many organisations now offer taster days so that you can give a new activity a go. There are even courses to improve your own education – such as learning to understand canine body language or how to take better photos of your very own canine model.

The final word...

If you live a busy life and are constantly imagining all the wonderful games, sports and activities you would like to do with your dog, but just haven't got the time, money or energy, then perhaps a quick reality check is required. Most of our dogs live pretty wonderful lives – and they help to enrich and fulfil ours, too. Maybe just curling up on the sofa with your dog, with goodies to hand and a Bond movie on TV, will do after all – or at least until 1 January! ✨



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Indoor games

As the winter months draw in, it may not always be our intention to go on the same long rambles we enjoyed during the summer. Even though we hardy dog-types have the best outdoor clothing and footwear any winter could challenge, there are times when we – or our dogs – might need to stay indoors. If flu strikes, how can you keep your dog active – in mind and body?

Words & photos: **Karen Wild**

Karen Wild, ABIPDT and APBC member has been training dogs for over 16 years. Her behaviour and training practice has helped many celebrities with their dogs. She works mainly with families and their dogs on vet referral and provides online advice through www.karenwild.co.uk or call her on 01778 560465

Treasure Hunt

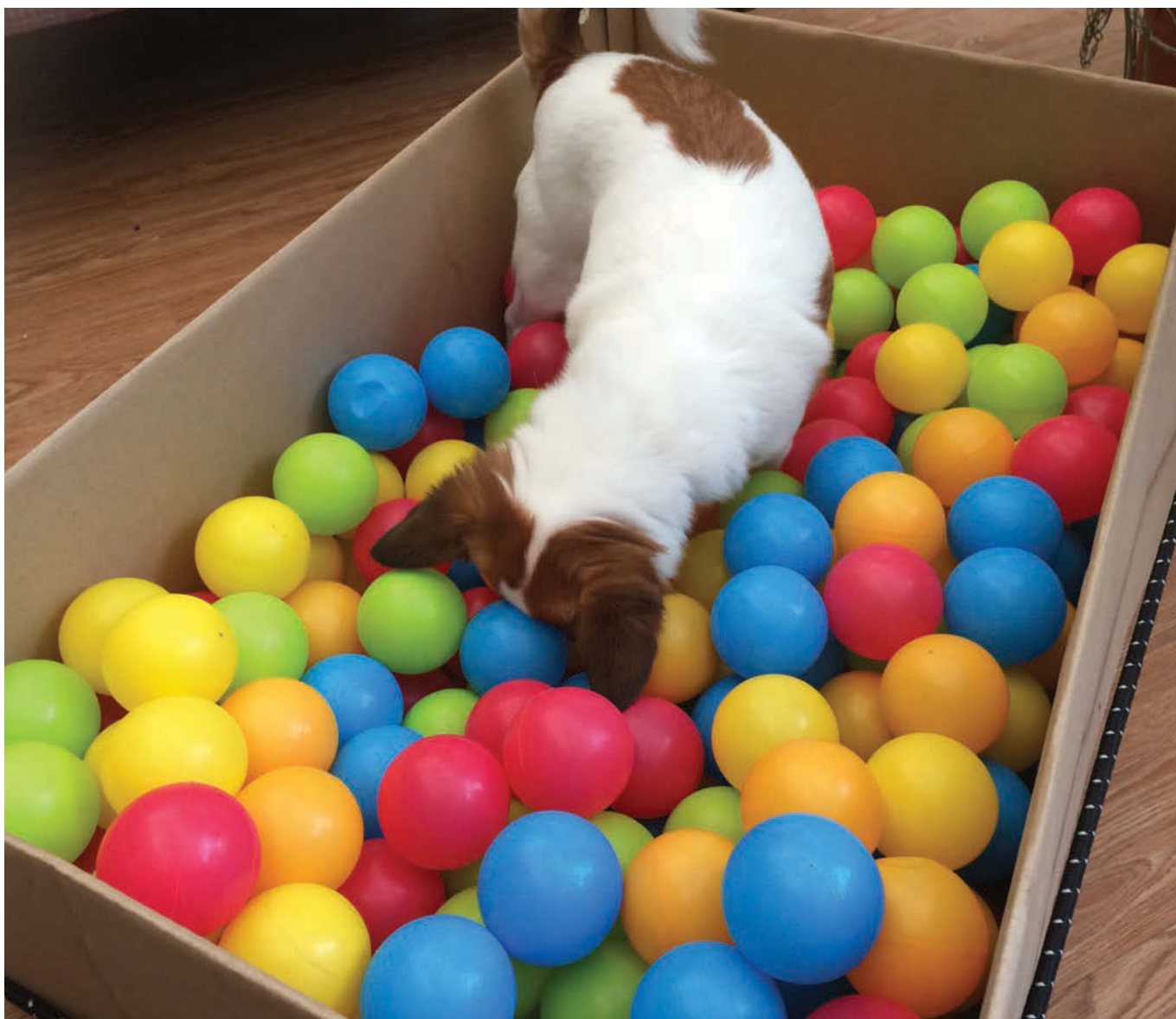
Level – beginner to expert forager

Even a timid dog can learn to enjoy this foraging activity. Get a low-sided, large box, or, if you want a more robust alternative, a child's plastic paddling pool does the trick. Next, have a look for secondhand play balls – the type used in children's ball pits. It doesn't matter if a few are squashed or a bit grubby!

The following stages must be done thoroughly, as your dog may not appreciate a sudden launch into something that can destabilise him.

Top tip

This is a great fundraiser for a dog club. Scatter treats in the base, and, for a small fee, each dog gets one minute to have a rummage round!



1 Take a few of the balls and scatter them in the base of the container. At the same time, allow your dog to see you place some strong-smelling treats in the box, too.

2 Allow your dog to enter the container and rummage for the treats. If your dog is reluctant, remove a few of the balls (or all of them) until he is happy to get in and out. Remember that we are not only looking to provide an activity, we are also helping to build his confidence, so only progress steadily and remain sensitive to his needs.

3 Gradually add extra balls and a few more treats. Once your dog learns that this is all part of the process, he will happily enter and rummage around! In time you can use less tempting treats.

For a food-oriented dog, this is the ideal way to feed his dinner portion. No more gobbling kibble from the food bowl.

If your dog is obsessed with the balls rather than food, supervise carefully. You do not need to add food to the container at all if you can use his preferred toys instead. The play balls themselves are no more than objects to be moved out of the way. If you start to use them as activity toys in themselves, don't be surprised if your dog gets over-stimulated with this game!



Tanzy's Tube Test

Level – beginner to intermediate forager

1 Take an empty kitchen/toilet roll and fold down one end in two flaps. Fill this with your dog's normal kibble, with the occasional piece of really tasty, smelly food pressed inside. Fold down the other end and press tightly down.

2 Allow your dog to sniff, chew and shake the goodies from the tube. If he is reluctant, poke some holes into the sides of the tube as well, or use tastier food inside for the first few tries.

Be aware that the card may get ripped up and make a mess! Look out for signs that your dog is eating the card as well and gently discourage him.



The step-by-step guide to indoor games



Super-box Scramble

by Lisa-Jane Mappin

Level – intermediate to expert forager

This is a bit like the cardboard tube test, but more hardcore. Once again, be careful not to allow your dog to eat the cardboard!

1 Put some goodies, dinner or a toy inside a small cereal box. Poke holes into the box if you wish, and close it. You can allow your dog to forage inside this box or you can add the next level.

2 Place this box into another, slightly larger box. If you wish, add some extra goodies or another toy into this layer. Again, you can allow your dog to forage at this toy, or you can continue adding layers of boxes until you have a really time-consuming forage challenge.



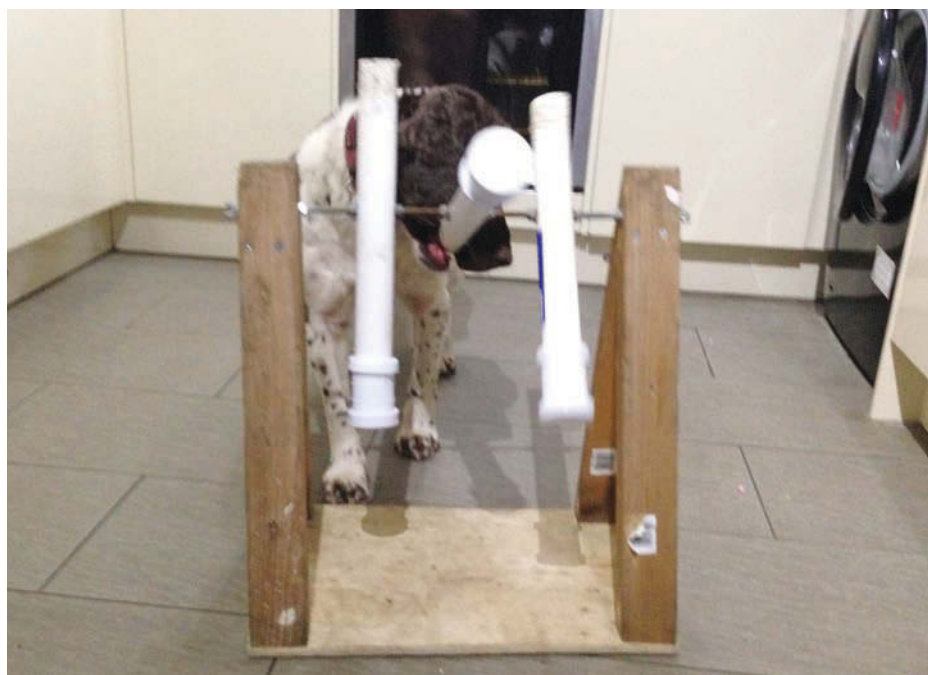
Waggy Walks Spinner Toy

Level – intermediate to expert forager, plus enthusiastic DIY human!

Used to take the edge off rainy days, Lisa-Jane Mappin feeds her dogs raw and uses this for their entire dinner nowadays. The dogs had to be helped to learn the toy initially, but this now provides them with a real challenge at teatime.

Here are Lisa's guidelines, as the item is easy to construct from the image but needs a little bit of explanation.

- 1** The activity toy is a plywood base with two wooden A-frame ends. They support a metal, threaded rod, which connects them.
- 2** The tubes are made from plastic piping (waste pipe); the metal rod passes through them near to the top so that the tubes are bottom heavy. The tubes have removable caps on the bottom end so they can be cleaned; these also act as counterweights so that they return to the upright position between spins, making it more difficult for food to come out (the metal rod passing through also increases difficulty).
- 3** Depending on how supple the dog is and how likely he is to use his legs or nose to move the tubes will determine the height of the toy.





Peter Neville's True Case History

Words:
Peter Neville

Peter Neville is Adjunct Professor in Animal Behaviour at the Dept of Animal Sciences, The Ohio State University, USA, and a Founding Director of the Centre of Applied Pet Ethology (Coape) in the UK. He has been a contributor to *Dogs Today* since the very first issue, and takes a True Case History for us from his files each month.

For details of the first regulated, dedicated Diploma in Companion Animal Behaviour and Training to degree level in the UK that Peter teaches with his Coape colleagues, Coape's distance-learning courses, help with behaviour problems, and info about Peter's other doggie activities, visit www.coape.org

When a young, female upstart tries to elbow herself into an established gentlemen's club, the grey-whiskered Basset members can't hide their disapproval...

Owners: Wendy and Rob Hackett
Address: Lancing, Sussex
Name: Shawnee
Breed: Basset Hound
Age: 10 weeks old
Sex: Entire female

The client

Hi Peter

My husband and I have just added another Basset to our household. Shawnee is a darling, but our older dogs are definitely not impressed with this new addition. They ignore her and clearly don't want to play with her, but she's desperate to interact with them.

Is there anything we can do to help them to accept her?

Thank you so much,


Wendy and Rob

Introducing a puppy into a household with existing older dogs can be problematic, especially if the older dogs aren't really of an age where they enjoy rambunctious playing. It isn't always the case that a new pup can breathe fresh life into senior dogs, as many believe. Sometimes they can be very annoying and depressing to a more sedate dog, who is looking simply to chill and doze his way through his later years.

Wendy and Rob's other Bassets were the same age, so they'd never really had any trouble with the dogs' varying energy levels, because they were all pretty much the same!

All three males were social and enjoyed walks on the beach to meet other dogs, and they generally behaved rather like the three male characters in *Last of the Summer Wine*. It was a cosy gentlemen's club, really, but when Shawnee arrived right in their home, they all started acting as if they'd never seen another dog before, never mind a smaller version of themselves!

When I met Wendy, Rob and Bassets at their home, I could see that the three older dogs were very unsettled. They were jumpy, and whenever Shawnee came near them, they'd slump off the couch and hide under the table. Jefferson, the eldest, would give her the evil eye, but in typical puppy innocent ignorance, this did absolutely



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nothing to deter her from trying to chew on his tail.

Wendy said they felt terrible for upsetting Jefferson, Wally and Delaney. Of course, no other dogs in the world have such expressive 'hang dog' faces as Bassets, because they are born with them to start with, and so the couple were constantly being given the full 'we hate our lives' look, in addition to their normal countenance.

The more Wendy tried to keep Shawnee from the older dogs, the

more she wanted to play with them when she did see them. Shawnee was a lovely, friendly dog, who had been bought from a nearby breeder and arrived fully housetrained and well socialised.

It's always great when I meet dogs who come from good breeders, and Shawnee was no exception. She sat when she said hello, and, after a cuddle, went off to chew on a shrub. I was quite surprised by Shawnee's ever-happy character amid all this rejection.

I chatted to the couple about how older dogs often need time to adjust and learn to trust new dogs. But since the puppy didn't understand this, we had to give her other ways to keep herself entertained, and Wendy and Rob would need to manage her carefully for a while.

Unfortunately, if you try to force a relationship to develop between dogs, it often ends up being an unpleasant one, so if we wanted the boys to accept her, we had to give them time. And, of course, we had to show them that her arrival only meant good things for them.

For anyone who knows hounds, there's no other pace to go than at their very own stubborn version!



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Tackling the problem

Luckily, all the dogs were very well trained, so their obedience cues were well rehearsed. They all shared a bed, and this was the first thing I wanted Wendy to change. Shawnee needed her own space, and the boys needed to have alternatives available to them without sacrificing comfort.

We introduced six more dog beds and made sure they were all similar to the ones the dogs were used to. They were placed throughout the house, and, as a special precaution, we placed a few in areas that Shawnee couldn't access yet. This would allow the older dogs space to sleep without being ambushed.

I also wanted to introduce chew toys into the household. Luckily, the older dogs didn't resource guard toys, which meant we could safely introduce these items without risking a dog fight. Only Jefferson guarded his food, and to make sure this didn't become a problem, I recommended feeding the dogs separately. Shawnee would learn over time to leave the other dogs' food alone, as long as Wendy and Rob kept an eye and taught her not to bother anyone while eating.

I explained the importance of appropriate toys to Wendy and Rob.

Shawnee couldn't chew the same kind of toys that the adult dogs were used to, so we had to give her puppy-strength toys. These would be divided into groups, and we would have Kong and Busy Buddy chew times when everyone was settled on their own beds. By giving these special toys to the older dogs when puppy was nearby, we could teach them that her presence resulted in access to one of their favourite activity toys.

I also wanted Rob and Wendy to take the dogs for

short strolls with Shawnee, once again to remind them that her arrival didn't mean their lives had changed for the worse.

Any signs of tolerance or friendliness had to be rewarded with quick, acknowledging praise rather than a treat (so as not to distract the dogs), and if it looked as if anyone was getting a bit fed up with Shawnee, Rob or Wendy could distract her with a toy and help her to focus on that instead of messing with an older dog.

I emphasised the importance of choice to the couple before leaving. The older dogs had to have a choice in their interactions with Shawnee because they didn't actively dislike her, they simply hadn't yet got to know her.

The couple expressed their relief that they didn't have to worry that Shawnee might never be welcome, and agreed that they just wanted their dogs to get along. I left after they promised to keep me updated on their progress.



The result...

Two weeks later, Wendy phoned me.

"It worked! Or rather, it's working! The older dogs are slowly but surely starting to interact more with Shawnee. I even saw Wally playing with her the other day, something we never thought would happen. We make a point of not letting her bug them, and it's amazing how well that's worked. Jefferson is allowing her to cuddle up to him, and I think, in another two weeks' time, they're all going to be best friends. Thank you for your help, Peter!"

I thought that was really excellent news, and while I felt that I hadn't done that much more than suggest a guiding hand here and there to what was going to happen anyway – all dogs are designed to be sociable – I was delighted that Shawnee was being allowed to join the Basset Gentlemen's Club after all!

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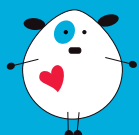
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Maple

Hi, my name is Maple – or 'Maple Syrup' as I fondly like to be called. Sadly, I have been struggling in rescue for far too long now and would dearly love to find my forever home. I am a real sweetie and never fail to brighten anyone's day.

I love to be involved with everything you are doing, but I'm never pushy. I travel well and love going on the train where I look out of the window and watch the countryside go by. I enjoy playing with toys, although I can get a little too excited with them sometimes, but I am learning to leave when asked. I am beautifully mannered when out and have encountered various breeds and sizes of dog. I can sometimes pull on the lead, but am easily corrected.

However, my favourite pastime is lying next to you on the sofa, having a snooze – I will even sleep through a thunderstorm! Be warned, though: I have a 'thing' for slippers and will pinch the left one if you're not looking! I am such an adorable, loving, easygoing snuggle monster and really do deserve to find my forever home. Please help me to begin the rest of my life.



Hi, Romy here. I was rescued from a petrol station together with my puppy. I am a very gentle, loving and friendly girl and would make the perfect dog for a family with children and animals.

Small mixed breed

2 years old
Female
Neutered
Not housetrained
Very sociable and playful with other dogs
Could live with cats
Good with children
Romania
Email info@savasafehaven.com or visit www.savasafehaven.com
Forever home needed

Romy



Hi, my name's Monty! I'm a Romanian rescue dog and have been living with my foster family here in the UK for a few months now. I really love cuddles, even though I've been told that I'm too big to be a lapdog. Being brushed is the next best thing to cuddles and I also enjoy being taught simple commands. I would love more training, as I am very receptive and eager to please. I am longing to be a loyal companion to my forever family – please help me.

Mixed breed

4 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained
Good with other dogs but prefers females
No cats, please
Could live with older children
West Sussex
07503 373478
Forever home needed

Monty



Howdy! I'm Ted, a very sweet dog that absolutely loves being around people. I do enjoy going out for a wander around, but I'm just as happy to chill out in my cosy bed and sleep the day away. I'm great on the lead and love squeaky toys. I can be playful at times, and, on the odd occasion, I like to have a quick run around, so I know I can keep you entertained. I really do love company and I have such a great temperament that I know I'd be a splendid companion for my new family.

Greyhound

6 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained, if given a structured routine
Could live with another dog of a similar size
No cats, please
Could live with children over 10 years old
Hertfordshire
020 8950 0177 or visit www.nawt.org.uk
Forever home needed

Ted



Hi, I'm a very pretty Staffie. I enjoy going for walks with my other four-legged pals, but I can be very nervous in new situations, so would like to find a quieter home with no children or other pets – that way I can be lavished with all the attention! I'd benefit from and enjoy training classes, as I'm eager to please and love the interaction that training provides. I also love playing with toys, especially my tennis ball! I'm a sweet girl and would love to find my forever home soon.

Staffordshire Bull Terrier

6 years old
Female
Neutered
Housetrained
Would prefer to be the only dog in the home
No cats, please
Needs an adult-only home
Dorset
01929 471340 or email lf@margaretgreenanimalrescue.org.uk
Forever home needed

Jasmine

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Dogs &
Cats
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proud to
sponsor
Adopt Me



Hi there, my name is Susie and I am looking for a loving forever home. I can be a little shy around new people to start with, but I'm really friendly once I get to know you. An active, playful girl, I enjoy my walks and love to play with my tennis ball. My very favourite treat, though, is a peanut butter Kong! You'd be nuts not to come and meet a sweet girl like me.

Boxer cross

4 years old
Female
Neutered
Housetrained
Would like to be the only dog in the household
No cats, please
Good with children
North Lincolnshire
01652 653343 or email nlincs@jerrygreendogs.org.uk
Forever home needed



Hello, I'm Trixie, a golden oldie with a loving personality. As I'm in my retirement years, I am looking for a quiet home, where I can recline in my big soft bed, relax and be pampered. Since arriving at the centre I have enjoyed little potters around the paddocks, interactive food games, and training with animal care staff. I love learning and have had fun building on my basic commands. Could you offer me a comfy sofa and a big cuddle to call my own?

Jack Russell Terrier

10 years old
Female
Not known if neutered
Housetrained
Would like to be the only dog in the household
No cats, please
Could possibly live with older teenagers
Leicestershire, but will home anywhere
01455 888257 or visit www.leicesteranimalaid.org.uk
Forever home needed



Hello, my name is Ethel and I'm a sweet, happy girl who loves a gentle fuss and cuddles. I am looking for a very quiet home with a patient and understanding owner. Because I have not lived in a home environment before, I will need help with housetraining and learning about household objects.

Yorkshire Terrier

10 years old
Female
Neutered
Needs help with housetraining
Could live with another quiet dog
Not tested with cats
Could live with older, calm children
Bath
01225 787321 or visit www.bcdh.org.uk
Forever home needed



Hi, I'm Izzie. I lost my humans and had to look after myself for a while. I went to a place with other dogs and was going to be put to sleep forever, but thankfully a kind lady heard about me and brought me to stay at her sanctuary. I am quite shy, but I'm a friendly girl who really does deserve a loving forever home.

Staffordshire Bull Terrier

2 years old
Female
Will be neutered
Clean in kennels
Needs to be the only dog in the household
No cats, please
Could possibly live with older children
Northamptonshire
01327 858238 or visit www.algernontrust.org.uk
Forever home needed

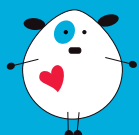


Loving homes come in all shapes and sizes – and so do our dogs.

At Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, we have a wide range of breeds ready for rehoming now.

Find your perfect pet at battersea.org.uk





Adopt me



I came to Lincoln Farm as an unclaimed stray. I was extremely dirty, so the staff here were eager to scrub me clean; I was very good at having a shower and brush. I'm a real cuddle monster. To me, there is nothing better than jumping on a human's lap and snuggling close while dozing off and having my belly rubbed. I do have an ongoing problem that may require medication for the foreseeable future, but you can find out more about this from the Lincoln Farm team.

West Highland White Terrier

8 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained
Could possibly live with a female dog
No cats, please
Could live with children over 12 years old
Dorset
01929 471340 or email lf@margaretgreenanimalrescue.org.uk
Forever home needed



Staffordshire Bull Terrier cross

4 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained
Needs to be the only dog in the household
No cats, please
Could live with older children
Norfolk
01508 548216 or email info@dogrescue.norfolk.com
Forever home needed

I would also prefer to be an only dog, as I do not want to have to share my new owners with other pets after waiting so long to find you.

I love to play fetch, but I don't like getting wet in the rain – I really do not think I am waterproof no matter what people tell me. I am very clean and have the tidiest kennel in the centre. I am very gentle with my toys, as I like to keep them for ages. I would like a home with people who understand me and have the time and patience to do a little work on my social manners when out with other dogs. In return I will do my best to be the most loving companion you could wish for.



Hello, my name is Rupert and I'm a real favourite with all the visitors and staff here. My favourite trick is to tap visitors on the back when they are looking at the dogs opposite me and it always makes them jump!

I have been at Meadowgreen Dog Rescue Centre for two years now and although I love it here, I really do long for a forever family of my own. I did go to a home for a couple of weeks, but they had some very annoying chickens, which squawked a lot, so I just could not help chasing them around the garden!



I was handed into rescue because my previous owners said I chased sheep, but I don't. I quite like looking at them through the fence, but am happy to walk away when you call me. I love playing with toys and I like my own bed, but neck rubs are my favourite – they make me go all daft and sleepy. My foster carer says I'm very cheeky and funny, and the staff at the rescue can't understand why I haven't been snapped up. Please offer me the warm, loving home I crave.

Staffordshire Bull Terrier

4 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained
Needs to be the only dog in the household
Has lived with cats in the past, but would need careful introductions
Good with children
Lanarkshire
07594 897338 / 07544 001099 or visit www.staffordshirerescuescotland.org.uk
Forever home needed



I arrived at The Mayhew after my owner died. I'm a friendly, outgoing boy and get along well with everyone I meet. I'm not really into toys, but I'll play with them if encouraged, though I'd much rather be curled up on someone's lap. I can be grumpy with other dogs and interact with them better if I'm off-lead, but I will need further controlled socialisation in this area. I'm looking for a home in a rural or semi-rural environment where I can be exercised without coming into constant contact with lots of other dogs.

Pomeranian

4 years old
Male
Neutered
Not known if housetrained
Needs to be the only dog in the household
Could live with dog-confident cats
Could live with children over 12 years old
London
020 8962 8000 or visit www.themayhew.org
Forever home needed



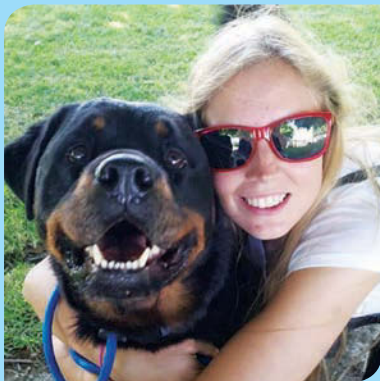
Hi, my name is Marvin and I'm a handsome little Jack Russell cross. Once I get to know you, I am very affectionate and love having a fuss. Since being in kennels, I have been quite stressed, so I'm looking forward to finding my forever home where I can have all the attention I deserve. I am a bundle of fun and really enjoy playing with my favourite squeaky toys. I'm a big fan of tasty treats and I'm very clever, so I'd really love having some all round basic training once I have settled in my new home.

Jack Russell Terrier cross

6 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained, if given a structured routine
Needs to be the only dog in the household
No cats, please
Needs an adult-only home
Hertfordshire
020 8950 0177 or visit www.nawt.org.uk
Forever home needed



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proud to
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Adopt Me



Hello, I'm Cuddles – Cuddles by name, cuddles by nature. I am a lovely boy who enjoys long walks, human company and toys. I am very intelligent and know all my basic commands, such as sit, down, leave and wait. I really can't wait to find my forever home, so please do come and meet me.

Rottweiler

5 years old
Male
Neutered
Not known if housetrained
Needs to be the only dog in the household
No cats, please
Could live with older children
Devon
01752 331602 or visit www.gablesfarm.org.uk
Forever home needed

Cuddles



I arrived at The Mayhew after being found abandoned on the streets of London. I am an active, outgoing boy and very friendly with people. I enjoy being showered with love and attention, and like nothing more than curling up on a lap and going to sleep. I can be grumpy with some dogs, especially when I'm on my lead. I am looking for a forever home with a family experienced in owning feisty terrier types, ideally living in a rural or semi-rural location, so I can be exercised without coming into contact with lots of other dogs.

Chihuahua-terrier cross

3 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained
Needs to be the only dog in the household
No cats, please
Could live with children over 12 years old
London
020 8962 8000 or visit www.themayhew.org
Forever home needed

Askey



**Good owners
can be young,
old, active or
retired. And so
can our dogs.**

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Hello, I'm Bowe. I'm eight years old, but most people find that hard to believe, including me, as I love to play like I'm still a pup. I had a family once, but the children weren't kind to me, so I would prefer to live with adults who know it's wrong to tease me. My family taught me a few things, but I do need to learn more. I am staying in kennels, but would love a home of my own again.

Collie-Dalmatian cross

8 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained
Not lived with other dogs before
Not tested with cats
Could live with older teenagers
Northamptonshire
01327 858238 or visit www.algernontrust.org.uk
Forever home needed

Bowe



I had an amazing career as a racer, but now I'm looking for a loving retirement home. I'm typical of my breed: I love to laze around in the garden and have an afternoon snooze, as well as having a run around to burn off some of that Greyhound energy. I treat everyone I meet as though they are my best friend and am gentle to walk on the lead. Due to my racing background, I do like to chase smaller animals, so I'll need to be exercised on a lead or in a secure environment.

Greyhound

5 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained
Would like to be the only dog in the household
No cats, please
Could live with older children
South Lincolnshire
01205 260546 or email slicns@jerrygreendogs.org.uk
Forever home needed

Tiger

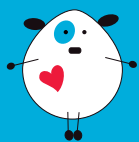


Hi, I'm Chuckie, a young Staffie. I lost my humans and they didn't come to find me. I went to live in some kennels until I could find a forever home, but I have been waiting patiently for over a year now. I love it when people visit me to play games and I enjoy learning new things. Please do come and meet me.

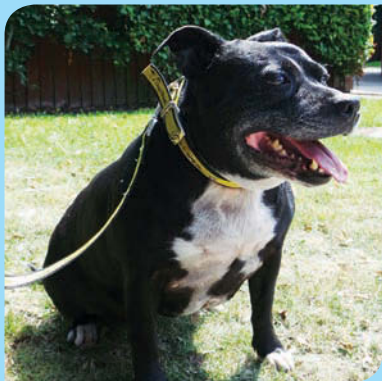
Staffordshire Bull Terrier

3 to 4 years old
Male
Will be neutered
Clean in kennels
Good with other dogs, but would prefer to be the only dog in the household
Not tested with cats
Could live with older children
Northamptonshire/Lincolnshire
01327 858238 or visit www.algernontrust.org.uk
Forever home needed

Chuckie



Adopt me



Hi there, I'm Balla, an affectionate girl who loves nothing more than having lots of cuddles with my carers. I adore playing and am happiest when lapping up attention from everyone I meet. I'm very active and enjoy going for long walks in the countryside, so I'll need to find owners who are as energetic as I am. I thrive on human company, so would love an owner who could devote time to playing games with me and be around most of the day to keep me company.

Staffordshire Bull Terrier

7 years old
Female
Neutered
Housetrained
Would prefer to be the only dog in the household
No cats, please
Could live with children over 6 years old
Merseyside
0151 480 0660 or visit www.dogtrust.org.uk
Forever home needed

Balla

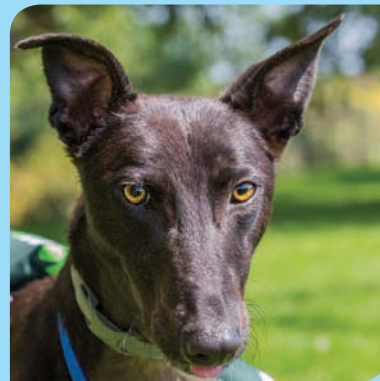


I was painfully thin when I arrived from the pound and have been on several meals a day to build up my weight. Not much is known about my previous life, but I am a friendly, affectionate boy. I'm great with other dogs and will happily share my kennel. I'm on a special diet and medication at the moment, as the vet believes I may have inflammatory bowel disease, but don't let this put you off! I have so much love to give and I thoroughly deserve a wonderful home.

Shar Pei

6 years old
Male
Neutered
Not known if housetrained
Great with other dogs
No cats, please
Would be best suited to a home with teenagers, as his history is unknown
Merseyside
0151 931 1604 or visit www.freshfieldsrescue.org.uk
Forever home needed

Judge



Hi, I'm Dustin. I'm still a young boy, so I'm looking for an active, training-minded home that will keep me out of mischief. I've started some training here at Wood Green and, even if I do say so myself, I'm bright and have picked it up very fast. If you have room in your life for a fun-loving and active boy, then I think we'll be the perfect match.

Lurcher

1 year old
Male
Neutered
Needs ongoing housetraining
Needs to be the only dog in the household
No cats, please
Could live with children over 14 years old
Cambridgeshire
0844 248 8181 or visit www.woodgreen.org.uk
Forever home needed

Dustin



Hello, my name is Barney and I'm a charming terrier cross in need of a forever home. I have lots of energy and would happily spend most of my time playing with my favourite toys. I am an intelligent boy and I like treats, so I'd definitely enjoy further training once I have settled in with my new family. I am very active and like being occupied, so I'd be best suited to experienced owners who have lots of time to keep me company and give me stimulation.

Terrier cross

6 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained, if given a structured routine
Needs to be the only dog in the household
No cats, please
Needs an adult-only home
Hertfordshire
020 8950 0177 or visit www.nawt.org.uk
Forever home needed

Barney



Hi, I'm Pepper, a gentle, kind girl, who arrived at the rescue with my four-month-old puppy. He has since found his forever home, so hopefully now it's my turn. I can be a little shy at first with new people, but I soon make friends. I would prefer a quieter home with lots of cuddles and time to come out of my shell. I have so much love to give and really would like to find the loving home I deserve.

Crossbreed

5 years old
Female
Neutered
Housetrained
Could live with another quiet, gentle dog
OK with cats
Could live with older children
Cambridgeshire/Norfolk
0844 555 5987 or visit www.ravenswoodpetrescue.co.uk
Forever home needed

Pepper



Hi, I'm Scarlett, a bundle of fun, looking for a new family to love. As I'm bubbly and bouncy, I'd be better living with older children, and because I like to cuddle, this might scare cats! I love having my doggie pals, though, and could perhaps live with another dog if we proved we got on really well first. I hope to meet you soon.

Staffordshire Bull Terrier

3 years old
Female
Neutered
Clean in kennel
Could live with another dog, pending introductions
No cats, please
Could live with older children, pending introductions
Worcestershire
0300 777 1460 or email bromsgrove@bluecross.org.uk
Forever home needed

Scarlett

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Hey, I'm Gracie-Mae, a beautiful little girl who is craving a loving home to call my own. A happy-go-lucky dog, I'm fond of my toys and treats, and love to sit on your lap for cuddles and kisses. Since arriving at the centre, I have shown myself to be one clever lady, learning lots of new things. I walk beautifully on a lead, will sit and wait, and will recall on command. I can be a little upset when left alone so would be happiest in a home where someone is around for most of the day.

Jack Russell Terrier cross

5 years old
Female
Neutered
Housetrained
Could live with a compatible dog
No cats, please
Could live with experienced, older children
Leicestershire, but will home anywhere
01455 888257 or visit www.leicesteranimalaid.org.uk
Forever home needed

Gracie-Mae



Hi, I'm Arnold, a friendly lad who is a typical Lab – I don't quite realise how big and strong I am. Playful and funny, I'm learning to return toys in exchange for a treat. However, I can mouth when my excitement levels go too high, so would be best suited to a home with older children who are used to big dogs. I do stop quickly when asked and am doing well in training – the behaviour team will show my new owners how to continue this at home. I will make an affectionate and fun pet.

Labrador Retriever

4 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained
Needs to be the only dog in the household
No cats, please
Could live with older children
Bath
01225 787321 or visit www.bcdh.org.uk
Forever home needed

Arnold



Perfect homes can be ten flights up, in a city street or down a country lane. And so can our dogs.

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Hi, I'm Asia, a really sociable young lady, who adores company and is very bright. I am still learning a few manners, as not everyone wants a dog that has enough spring in her step to plant a kiss on your forehead, but I am working on this. I am still a pup at heart, but if you are willing to continue my training, then do come and say hello. I promise I will try to keep my feet on the ground.

Crossbreed

2 years old
Female
Neutered
Not housetrained
Good with other dogs
No cats, please
Needs an adult-only home
South Lincolnshire
01205 260546 or email slicncs@jerrygreendogs.org.uk
Forever home needed

Asia



Hi, I'm Lucky, a lovely lad who is finding it hard here in kennels after a difficult start in life. I am looking for an owner with experience and patience to build my levels of trust. I love to play, especially with tennis balls, and am good with other dogs, so a calm doggie companion in my new home may really help me. I am a clever boy, and I think I would blossom into a lovely and fun pet when out of kennels.

Staffie cross

2 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained
Good with other dogs, so may like a canine companion
Not tested with cats
Could live with older children
Bath
01225 787321 or visit www.bcdh.org.uk
Forever home needed

Lucky

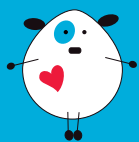


Hello, my name is Fletcher and I'm a handsome, friendly boy. I enjoy having a tummy tickle, I love playing with my toys, and I really like to have a good sniff around on my walks. I am very smart, keen to learn, and I already know basic commands, so I'd like an active owner who will give me further reward-based training and keep my young mind busy. I would benefit from a home with plenty of exercise and stimulation, where someone has lots of time to spend with me.

Beagle

2 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained, if given a structured routine
Could live with another dog
No cats, please
Needs an adult-only home
Hertfordshire
020 8950 0177 or visit www.nawt.org.uk
Forever home needed

Fletcher



Adopt me



Hi there, my name is Rupert. I am a clever boy and have learnt lots of commands while I've been at Lincoln Farm. I would really enjoy going to training classes with my new family, too, because it would be a great thing for us to do together. I'm a bundle of fun and love to play with my favourite toy – a tennis ball! I like to bounce alongside it as I catch it. I also enjoy cuddles, but not quite as much as running about, as I'm a very active chap.

Crossbreed

2 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained
Could live with a female dog
Could possibly live with a cat
Would be better suited to an adult-only home
Dorset
01929 471340 or email lf@margaretgreenanimalrescue.org.uk
Forever home needed



Hi, I'm Tia. My first few weeks of life were not good and so I am quite nervous in unfamiliar situations. I have lived in a kind home since the age of 10 weeks, but it isn't working out with the other dog I share the house with (who is a similar age), so we need to be separated. I am incredibly clever and willing to learn, and my confidence has grown considerably, but I would like to live with an experienced person who can continue my training and has no other pets for me to worry about.

Terrier cross

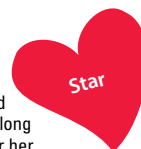
2 years old
Female
Neutered
Housetrained
Good with other dogs, but needs to be the only one in the household
No cats, please
Needs an adult-only home
Northamptonshire
01327 858238 or visit www.algemontrust.org.uk
Forever home needed



Hello, my name is Star and I am looking for a home at the tender age of 17 years, as my owner died. Due to my age, I am looking for a calm, quiet home where I can live out my twilight years in peace. I am a little arthritic and am now on pain relief, but I will be a devoted and loving companion. Surely someone somewhere has it in their heart to offer an old lady like me a loving home after all I have been through?

Staffordshire Bull Terrier

17 years old
Female
Neutered
Not known if housetrained
Good with other dogs, as long as they don't jump all over her
No cats, please
Could live with calm, quiet children over 9 years old
Merseyside
0151 931 1604 or visit www.freshfieldsrescue.org.uk
Forever home needed



Luke here! I lost my humans, so now I need to find a new family. I like most other dogs, but can be a bit wary if they are bigger than me. I like to play, so would only like to live with a confident dog. I need a little help with learning how humans expect me to behave, but I try really hard and learn very quickly.

Staffordshire Bull Terrier

2 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained
Good with most dogs, but prefers females
Not interested in calm cats; has not lived with cats before
Could live with older children
Northamptonshire/Lincolnshire
01327 858238 or visit www.algemontrust.org.uk
Forever home needed



Hello, Nero here! I've been finding life in kennels a little scary, and although the staff have been very welcoming and kind, what I really want is a home of my own with people who can teach me the ways of the world and understand my sensitive side. If that sounds like you, then please come and meet me.

Lurcher

3 years old
Male
Neutered
Not known if housetrained
Could possibly live with a calm, mature dog
No cats, please
Could live with children over 14 years old
Cambridgeshire
0844 248 8181 or visit www.woodgreen.org.uk
Forever home needed



I came to the centre because my previous owner changed his job and I spent a lot of time on my own. I'm very bouncy and love to give big kisses. I am also a playful chap and specialise in ball chasing, but I do get a bit distracted and forget to bring it back! I have some very good pals here and may like to share my home with a well-mannered young lady dog. I really am an easygoing boy and cannot understand why you haven't found me yet – I've been waiting for so long!

Staffordshire Bull Terrier

5 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained
Could live with a well-mannered bitch
No cats, please
Would be better living with older children, due to his bounciness
Norfolk
01508 548216 or email info@dogrescuenorfolk.com
Forever home needed



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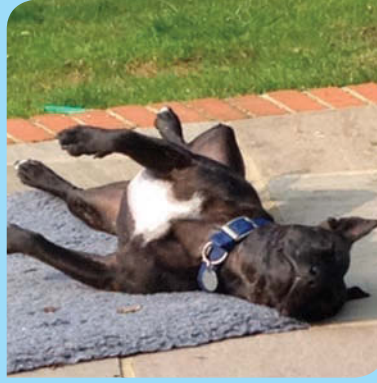


I arrived at Freshfields in 2010 because my owners were disabled and couldn't care for me. I was always a nervous boy, who struggled to cope with stress, but after going to two homes and finally ending up back at the rescue, my confidence has reached an all-time low. I'm a lovely, affectionate boy once I've learned to trust you, but I need time to accept people. A loving boy with an endearing, fun character, given the chance I will lick you to death! I really do have the makings to be the most loyal dog.

Crossbreed

7 years old
Male
Neutered
Not known if housetrained
Could live with other dogs
No cats, please
Needs an adult-only home
Merseyside
0151 931 1604 or visit www.freshfieldsrescue.org.uk
Forever home needed

Max



Nine months ago, I was brought to Battersea without much training in place and was a bit excitable. Like all Staffies, I love attention and a bit of fun. My foster carer says I'm still pretty puppyish, especially with new discoveries... like shoes! And my lead! In the evening, I like to cuddle up and watch TV.

Staffordshire Bull Terrier

1 year old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained
Would prefer to be the only dog in the household
Not tested with cats
Could live with older children
Berkshire
01784 494443 or email bow.rehomers@battersea.org.uk
Forever home needed

Emmett



Amazing families can be out working, playing with the kids or adoring the cat. And so can our dogs.

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Lurcher

2 years old
Male
Neutered
Housetrained
Could live with another dog
No cats, please
Needs an adult-only home
Dorset
01929 471340 or email lf@margaretgreenanimalrescue.org.uk
Forever home needed

Sooty

Hello, my name is Sooty and I'm a loving, playful Lurcher, looking to find my forever family.

I'm a very affectionate boy who loves my cuddles; to me, there is nothing better than snuggling up on the sofa while having my ears tickled. However, I can be a little withdrawn around new people, as I find them quite scary.

My trainer here at Lincoln Farm has been helping me overcome my fear and I'm making an enormous improvement. Her secret weapons are hotdogs and cheese – yum!

As a result of this problem, I am looking for an understanding owner who will help me improve my confidence, as I have lots of potential in life and am

very eager to please. I also love playing and running around. My toys are my absolute favourites and I often hear the staff laughing while watching me throw my toys in the air and catch them again – it's such fun!

Due to my high chase instinct, I am unable to live with cats or small furries, but I can be rehomed in a family with another dog.



Hello, I'm Maloney and I'm looking for a forever home with my sister, Anna. An affectionate pair, we love to be with our human family and can't wait to have a place to call our own again, where we can enjoy lots of fuss and attention. If you have room for us both, we'll reward you with twice the love.

Staffordshire Bull Terriers

10 years old
Females
Neutered
Housetrained
Need to be the only dogs in the household
No cats, please
Could live with children over 11 years old
Cambridgeshire
0844 248 8181 or visit www.woodgreen.org.uk
Forever home needed

Maloney & Anna

Good Boy

Do you know a dog who deserves the Good Boy treatment?

Send details of the dog you would like to nominate, with your name, address and phone number to: Good Boy Good Dog Award, *Dogs Today*, The Old Print House, 62 The High Street, Chobham, Surrey GU24 8AA or email editorial@dogstodaymagazine.co.uk



A family pet by day and crime-fighting canine by night; *Dogs Today* unmasks an unlikely hero...

When you think about natural guard dogs, which breeds come to mind? Rottweilers and Dobermanns? Perhaps German Shepherds? It's more than likely. But Labradors? This isn't a breed normally associated with protecting people and property, particularly if they are teddy-bear yellow, sappy and named Harry...

It was an ordinary Monday night in the Walker household in Stowmarket, Suffolk, when ferocious barking awoke the family in the early hours. Harry, a five-year-old Labrador, had become very disturbed by something. His owners, Colin and Linda, were perplexed; Harry was normally a very quiet dog.

"Harry is such a laid-back individual, but that night he was really barking," recalls Linda. "We knew he meant business."

Despite this, Colin couldn't pinpoint anything wrong in the house, besides their en-suite bathroom window being open wider than usual. Thinking nothing of it, Harry was calmed and the family slept.

It wasn't until the following morning that more mysteries

were discovered. Colin let Harry and seven-year-old chocolate Labrador George into the garden after their breakfast, and noticed the back gate was unlocked and wide open. There were also footprints in the mud that didn't belong to anyone in the family. Colin decided to ring the police, and, on their advice, covered the footprints with plastic.



The police informed Colin and Linda that there had been a spate of burglaries in the surrounding area, perpetrated by a gang of four or five men, and the couple were the latest victims. Thanks to Harry's sharp warning, nothing had been stolen and, more importantly, his owners were safe.

"The police said the gang probably thought that the en-suite window was just a bathroom window, and that it was likely they

would have entered our bungalow with us only yards away, lying in bed!" Linda recounts. "It was then that we realised we could have been in real danger if Harry hadn't barked and scared them off."

"One of our neighbours who was targeted has two dogs who slept through it. Harry was a real superstar that night."

The footprints that had been carefully protected in the garden contributed the forensic evidence needed to apprehend one of the gang, who was subsequently sentenced to eight months in prison for burglary and burglary with intent.

Harry's owners meanwhile remain mystified by his sudden bravery. "Harry thinks everybody is his friend and that they should love him like we do, so it was quite a shock that he showed such aggression to the prowlers. I felt he knew they were a danger to us instinctively," ponders Linda. "We used to say that he and George would invite burglars in and make them a cup of tea!"

"It's a wonder they woke him up actually. Harry usually goes into such a deep sleep and sometimes even misses the fridge being opened. He snores so loudly we have to turn the TV up!"

Linda is confident, however, that Harry would return the call of justice once more.

"Although Labs aren't natural guard dogs, and our chocolate George remained quiet throughout, knowing that Harry would alert us to danger again is quite comforting to know." ★

Words:

Victoria Heywood

Each dog featured will receive a Good Boy hamper of treats, toys and other goodies courtesy of Armitage Pet Care.

The hamper will include these top quality treats which are sure to get those tails wagging! Deli Treats are oven-roasted with real meat and contain no artificial colours or flavours



The Labrador Lifeline Trust



Registered charity: 1076061

Dedicated to rescuing, rehoming and helping Labradors.

The Labrador Lifeline Trust is a registered charity which rehomes pure bred and first cross Labradors, across most of the UK. We are full members of the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes and are an accredited Kennel Club Breed Rescue, therefore adhering to a strict code of conduct at all times. Everyone involved with TLLT, is passionate about the breed and all of the dogs that pass through our hands, we work as a very professional team, and undergo regular training so that we are up to date with current legislations.

We will help any Labrador in need, regardless of age or infirmity. We feel that every Labrador deserves a chance of happiness.



Our veterinary bill each year is horrendous, but we will not turn a dog away that needs specialist veterinary help. We do not judge people who have to give up their dogs, sometimes it is a very difficult decision for them. We pride ourselves on being there to help them through the tough time.

The Charity do not use casual home-checkers or dog vetters, all assessments are carried out by our own experienced Labrador owner/helpers, therefore, our Area Coordinators know they can vouch for the authenticity of the reports they receive. We never rehome a dog that has not been fully assessed and we will not put a dog into a home that has not been checked thoroughly for its suitability.

New owners can therefore be assured that the dog they adopt is the one that will suit them. Veterinary history is sought on each dog and forwarded to the new vet to ensure continuity of any treatment.

With our growing number of excellent foster homes, it means we can place a dog into a home environment where it will be less stressed and have continuity of care. If we need to use kennels, we ensure that they are good quality boarding kennels that have been visited and passed by us.

If you are looking to adopt a Labrador, then please call us, alternatively if you have a Labrador which you may need to rehome, again call us. Maybe you would just like some advice, again we are always here to try and help.



Telephone: 01256 884027

Email: info@labrador-lifeline.com

www.labrador-lifeline.com



Looking for a new best friend? Please consider a rescue dog.

Dogs are often homeless through no fault of their own. An older, trained dog can often suit better than a puppy yet many welfare charities have dogs looking for homes. Sadly, some are always overlooked and can stay at the kennels for many months – or even years.

Try to see beyond the looks – remember that appearance has nothing to do with temperament. A dog may be barking in kennels in an attempt to seek attention, or simply out of boredom or frustration, so please do give them a second thought.

Each month on this page we feature a dog who is desperately looking for a new home. This issue we feature Olivia, a Staffie cross. If you can offer her the loving home she deserves, call Cheltenham Animal Shelter on 01242 523521.

Priority will be given to those living in the Gloucestershire area to enable relevant home-checks to be carried out.



Olivia

Olivia was abandoned at the shelter two years ago and staff can't understand why she has not found a forever home yet. She is a friendly, affectionate girl with wonderful manners, and will do anything for a little treat!

Olivia learnt sit, get down, shake paws, leave things alone, and watch all in her first seven months in rescue, and while it's taken a bit longer, she is now learning to walk nicely and not pull, although she does prefer to be in the front. It took Olivia a while to learn her new name, but now she comes running when she hears it called, unless she's found something particularly interesting to sniff!

Olivia is learning how to do agility courses now. Jumping is her favourite, but she is not a fan of the seesaw. She

sometimes walks with other dogs, which is great when they are calm and collected, but if they aren't, she can get distracted and frustrated.

Olivia is quite a strong girl, so adults and teenagers would be better for her to live with. She needs to gain confidence with new people, but you can easily win her heart with food.

Olivia doesn't want to spend a third Christmas in rescue, so please do come and meet her.

Olivia will be fully vaccinated, flea treated, wormed and chipped. The shelter also provides a month's free PetPlan insurance.

If you can offer Olivia a loving home, call Cheltenham Animal Shelter on 01242 523521 or visit www.gawa.org.uk

Age:	4 years old
Breed/type:	Staffordshire Bull Terrier cross
Size:	Large
Colour:	Black and white
Coat:	Smooth
Neutered:	Yes

Cheltenham Animal Shelter

Cheltenham Animal Shelter has been helping animals since 1926. It provides kennelling for strays from four councils and takes in rescue dogs from Gloucestershire Constabulary as well as rehoming dogs, cats and small pets from owners who can no longer look after them.

The charity's mission is: "To provide shelter for homeless domestic animals from across the county whilst attempting to locate appropriate new homes. We also aim to educate members of the public and professionals in correct and appropriate animal husbandry through education programmes."

The shelter is very careful to ensure that each and every animal goes to the right home.

Visit www.gawa.org.uk for more information or call 01242 523521

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Happy Ending

German Wirehaired Pointer Minty is now living happily with Paul Eastick

"Minty is not the easiest of dogs and is disillusioned and disappointed with life's punches," read the Hardest to Rehome of our May 2014 issue. "He needs boundaries as well as love."

We are so pleased to report that someone opened their doors to Minty, giving this old Romanian hunting dog the wonderful life he always deserved.

Paul Eastick had recently lost his last dog, Smokey, when he contacted Many Tears Animal Rescue. Smokey had also had a very difficult life; terrified of children and strangers, he had clearly been abused, and Paul had been one of only three people who could touch him. Many Tears recognised Paul's experience with challenging dogs and introduced him to Minty.

"He greeted me with a growl," recalls Paul. "Not the best of starts, but that never put me off; he had every right to be like that."

Undeterred, Paul asked to take Minty for a little walk down a nearby lane and the connection was instant.

"I could tell that Minty was so grateful, and even though it was raining, he loved it. I immediately felt something for him. I just knew I was the one for him, as much as he was the one for me."

There was just one potential problem: Paul already owned two cats.

"Many Tears were prepared to bring Minty for a home visit and

see how he got on with them," said Paul. "Minty saw the cats and went to chase them up the stairs. I knew that Lenny, the male, would only take so much. About halfway up the staircase, he turned to greet Minty with a right hook. This stopped Minty dead in his tracks, and he never bothered them again!"

With harmony in the house secured, Minty was welcome, but it wasn't the smoothest adjustment for him.

"He was unruly, to say the least, and he was very, very stressed," recalls Paul. "I let him settle down in his own time; I never pushed him on anything. It was three days before I even stroked him, but I talked to him all the time, just as you would a frightened child. I know he listened to me, as his head would tilt from side to side as I chatted away to him."

With security and affection, Minty is a different dog today, even happily sharing the settee with the cats, and Paul wants to encourage everyone to consider rescuing a dog.

"You will benefit as much, if not more than the animal you rescue – and what better place to go than Many Tears, where patience is as plentiful as the animals they house."

"I have always had my dogs from rescue centres, as I feel that there are too many dogs already, and the last thing I want to do is encourage breeders to make more. A dog is a dog, no matter what breed it is, and they all love you the same. That's what counts." ★

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Our 'Adopt Me' section was introduced so we could feature as many rescue dogs as possible, to encourage adoption instead of buying. With so many homeless dogs in kennels waiting for a loving home, we really hoped their chances could improve by highlighting them in the magazine.

This popular section has helped raise the profile of many rescue dogs and organisations, so it is here for the foreseeable future!

On this page we follow up on some of the dogs featured in 'Adopt Me' to keep you updated on how these dogs are settling into their forever homes...



Wagg Foods is kindly donating three months' worth of free food to dogs rehomed in this section. If you have given a home to a dog featured in *Dogs Today*, please email enquiries@dogstoday.co.uk or call 01276 858880

Many Tears is based in south Wales, and is dedicated to rehabilitating and rehoming unwanted dogs. For more information, visit www.manytearsrescue.org or call 01269 843084.



Dog owners are
a breed apart
when it comes to
helping others.
Can you come to
the rescue?



Help to the Max!

GSD Max from Romania suffered cruelty and neglect at the hands of his owners and had a severed foot. Through the help of the GSD Helpline and K9 Rescue Remedy, he was brought to the UK and Supervet Noel Fitzpatrick operated on him to straighten his crushed leg.

The two charities have run online auctions and fundraising initiatives to pay for

Max's transportation, surgery, prosthetics, neutering and aftercare.

GSD Helpline helps fund veterinary care and training to help prevent cruelty and to rehome dogs. Call 0800 772 0767 or visit www.germanshepherdhelpline.co.uk for more information. K9 Rescue Remedy also rescues dogs for rehoming. Contact them on 07446 231015.

To feature on these
pages, email editorial@dogstodaymagazine.co.uk



Can you help Cyprus Pride House help abandoned pets?

Animals in Cyprus are frequently discarded like rubbish and left to fend for themselves. They risk being poisoned, run over, abused and starved. It's a constant struggle to help all the suffering cats and dogs to survive and avoid cruelty.

Cyprus Pride House is a rescue centre run by June and Michael, a couple who moved out to Cyprus in 2002 and were shocked by the many abandoned and abused cats and dogs there. They run a programme of neutering, feeding and finding forever homes in the UK and in Europe for their animals. Fonzi (pictured) came to the shelter as a stray.

If you could help by adopting, fostering or fundraising, visit www.cypruspridehouse.com



Join the A Team!



The Animal Team Transport Group works with rescues and volunteers to move dogs to foster placements, rescue spaces and away from pounds.

The national network organises the transportation of between 15 and 20 dogs every week, moving them to a better, kinder, safer life – but more help is needed.

Could you spare time to become a voluntary driver or carry out home checks?

Or perhaps you could donate something to its fortnightly fundraising auctions.

Contact the team via Facebook at www.facebook.com/pages/The-Animal-Team-Rescue-Register/233383466745037



If you would like to make a donation to Terrier SOS by sponsoring Waffle and his ball hunt (featured in the November issue), the correct Paypal address is: terriersos@shonalona.co.uk



Make it a memorable year...

In Moldova, street dogs are picked up and taken to government-run shelters where they are often put to sleep. The ALGA Moldavian Dog Rescue 'Live' shelter is run by volunteers who want to give the dogs the best possible chance in life.

They aim to carry out a rescue, neuter and rehome programme, and need funds to buy anaesthetics, veterinary equipment and provisions to care for the dogs.

The Moldavian Dog Rescue 2015 calendar can be ordered in advance through fomsuk@hotmail.com, with all proceeds going towards the charity. A Paypal account has been set up in the name moldaviandogrescue@gmail.com and donations are welcome.

Contact Angela Eagle at ciangelica@yahoo.com or visit the Moldavian Dog Rescue Dog Adoption Page on Facebook for more information.

8in1 Minis: the bite-size treats with a BIG taste

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Do you have an amazing dog who doesn't look his or her age?

This is your chance to share your secrets of old age success or to tell us what makes your dog a Golden Oldie. Send a photo with your letter and include your dog's weight – this is needed to calculate age in human years. If your dog is 100 years old in human years he will receive a special telegram.

Write in to: Older & Wiser, Dogs Today, The Old Print House, 62 The High Street, Chobham, Surrey GU24 8AA or email editorial@dogstodaymagazine.co.uk

Each dog featured here will receive a tub of Senior Dog, courtesy of VetSpec, from its range of innovative canine additives designed to optimise your dog's performance and maintain a long and healthy life.

For free nutritional advice, please call 01845 565030 or visit www.vetspec.co.uk



Fate lends a paw

I'd like to nominate my Ralfie as the Golden Oldie of the month...

Ralf is 13 years old and weighs 48kg and his ID papers say he is a Labrador-GSD cross, and, until he was 12, he was a guard dog at a sawmill in rural France. He'd started to wander and had been picked up by the pound a couple of times, so the sawmill owners said enough was enough and left Ralf at the pound.

Some refuges in France participate in a national scheme called Operation Doyens, for dogs who are over 10 years old. This means they have no adoption fee and you can benefit from up to 600 Euros of vet funding to cover their needs. Even so, at the refuge where I volunteer about 15 per cent of the dogs

are over 10, and big boys don't tend to be so quickly adopted. Ralf still hadn't been adopted after a month.

The refuge has its own guard dog: Belle, a seven-year-old German Shepherd cross, who is as smart as a whip. I say guard dog, but she is so much more than that. She regularly meets, greets and reassures new arrivals. She does like to let herself out of the refuge from time to time for a wander in the forest, and, this time, she had taken Ralf with her. He'd been at liberty because he was such a placid, well-socialised dog and we thought it would increase his chance of getting seen. Well, it did!

Another volunteer asked me to have a look for Ralf and Belle on my way home, and, by some miracle, I found them seven miles from the refuge, trotting towards my house. The refuge had closed for the night, so I put up my impromptu house guests in the laundry room. With three of my own, I really had no intention of getting another, but thought it might be a great time for my own dogs to socialise with two others – especially dogs who had such good doggie manners. They all got on really well and I took some photos to advertise Ralf across the various dog rehoming networks.

Two weeks later, I'd not had even a whiff of interest. I deliberated and deliberated over taking him – could I

really manage four? Would adding an old boy to the pack upset the balance? I spoke to a friend who said, "If you can, you should" and the deal was done.

I can't help thinking that fate brought us together. Had he not gone for a wander with Belle that afternoon, had I not stayed late to help a lady rehome another of our boys, and had I been seconds faster or slower, I never would have found them and never would have taken them home.

Ralf is just amazing. He has taught all my others about the joys of digging, and although I thought he would teach my two-year-old Flattie cross some manners, the youngster has taught him the fun to be had in chasing things, in walks, in watching cows, in rolling in fox poo, and in barking at crows. Having worked all his life and never having been a house dog, he has made an amazing journey and I really hope I can give him a wonderful retirement.

Ralf would say that the key to success is to sleep loads, especially in doorways, and to find the fun in each moment you are awake.

Emma Lee, by email

At 83 years old we are so glad to hear that Ralf will be enjoying his twilight years in such a wonderful home – it certainly sounds as if it was always meant to be. Happy Christmas!

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Ask the Insurance Doctor

Neil Flint of www.vip4u.co.uk is *Dogs Today's* pet insurance doctor. Neil is a trusted pet insurance adviser to pet owners across the UK, offering fee-free advice on almost all aspects of pet insurance.

If you have any queries or would like to know more about pet insurance then contact Neil or any members of his VIP staff on 0845 601 8575, visit www.vip4u.co.uk or email enquiries@vip4u.co.uk.

The questions and answers are based on daily enquiries *Dogs Today* or Neil receives, but names have been changed for privacy.

Dog
tired

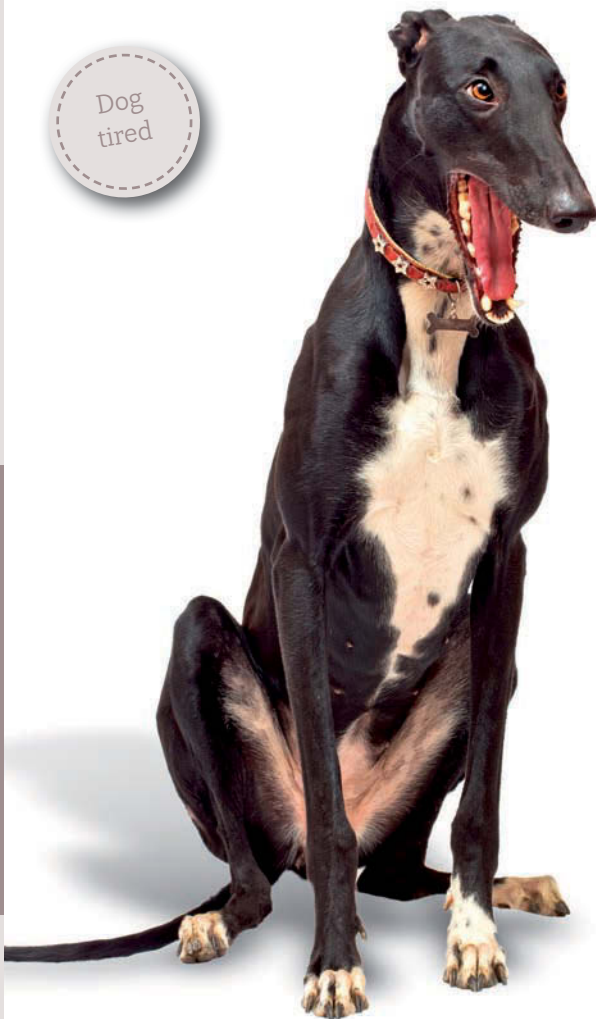


Photo posed by a model

I have a maximum-benefit policy for my Greyhound, Grace, whom I adopted six months ago when she was nine years old.

A couple of weeks ago, Grace woke up one morning and didn't seem herself; she didn't want to go for a walk and wasn't interested in her food. After a couple of days of this, I took her to the vet, who did some blood tests and a scan, but could not find anything medically wrong with Grace and put it down to lethargy. No treatment was given.

I haven't submitted a claim form for the blood tests and scan yet, as I wasn't sure if the lethargy would be classed as a medical condition. Also, due to no diagnosis being made, if Grace were to become ill in the future with similar symptoms, would this be classed as a continuation of the lethargy condition if a claim was made?

Helen Baxter, by email

NEIL SAYS

Regardless of whether you feel you will be covered, it is always worth submitting a claim for any treatment your pet has received. The fact that Grace did not have anything wrong with her medically is irrelevant, as your pet had to undergo the tests to eliminate that she did have something wrong with her. The vet notes will show that the tests carried out were necessary and that it was due to lethargy. Any future symptoms and diagnosis will be based on the vet notes, which are usually requested by the insurance company.

Remember, pet insurance is there to help you pay for veterinary care and, as Grace needed tests, this should entitle you to make a claim on the policy. Just make sure you submit your claim within your insurer's time limit.

Give
me your
answer,
do...

I will shortly be bringing home our new Labrador puppy, Daisy. My husband and I haven't had pets since childhood, so have never had to look into the costs involved.

I can see the benefits of having pet insurance and, after reading your page for the past couple of months, know that lifetime cover is the right level of cover to have. What I am confused about is how much cover is necessary to avoid having to make up any shortfall, as the amounts of lifetime cover available vary such a lot with providers.

Jo Fisher, by email

NEIL SAYS

Pet insurance is a useful way of budgeting for vet fees by paying a monthly amount without having to worry about the financial implications if a serious accident or illness occurs.

It is difficult to decide how much cover to have, as choosing too much cover may result in higher premiums that you may find difficult to maintain, and having too little could result in you having to pay the difference. Finding a balance between what you can afford and the level of cover is the key to arranging pet insurance.

It is worth researching the types of ailments your breed of pet may have and the likely costs involved in treating them. With some insurers it is not always possible to increase your level of cover, especially if you have made claims, once you have taken out a policy.

Contact one of the advisors at VIP, who will be able to determine what level of cover is right for Daisy and your needs.

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Psychologist and pet bereavement specialist
Laura Lee owns a tabby cat called Archie and is the co-author of *Absent Friends: How to Cope with the Loss of a Treasured Pet*.

She offers advice on how to prepare for losing a pet and coming to terms with a death when the inevitable happens...

Christmas is a special time for remembering past and present loved ones

I remember Christmas as a child in Lancashire when it snowed and was so cold that people were ice-skating on the frozen roads and on the nearby lake. You could see your breath and feel the cold air stinging your cheeks. I recall building snowmen and then standing on the top of the stairs late at night, watching to see if they were still there, wondering if they would be gone by morning.

I remember the laughter of friends and family arriving and the wonderful anticipation of what would be in my sack on Christmas morning. Every year there would be something new: one big present and lots of little ones. I liked the little ones because many of them were constants – such as the new crayons, drawing book and the chocolate selection box!

There was one other constant in all my childhood memories – our family dog, Sabishe, a beautiful, loving and loyal German Shepherd Dog. She was always there, when I was playing in the snow, walking to the park, and toasting crumpets by the fire.

Christmas was special for her, too. She had her own stocking filled with treats and was well served by the turkey leftovers. I remember opening my presents and Sabishe rolling around in all the paper and glitter.

I remember her sitting watchfully as I unwrapped some goodies, probably wondering if she would be given any.

Since then I have had the pleasure of sharing the company of many other dogs. Probably the one closest to my heart was Daisy, a wonderful black Labrador who came into my life shortly after my son was born. She was a handful – a Houdini artist who could escape whatever barrier we put in her way.

Daisy made Christmas extra special, too. My children loved her in the same way that I had loved Sabishe. Daisy was the hub of our family, in the centre of whatever drama was unfolding, and she loved Christmas.

Snow day

I remember a special Christmas when it snowed in Lincolnshire. My mother came to visit and a snowman and a snow dog were built right in front of the lounge window. Daisy joined in the fun and raced round and round the garden, rubbing her nose in the snow. Precious memories.

Then Millie came along, a sweet Shih Tzu who was mischievous and loving all at the same time. She was bossy and demanding but had such style and character. She never failed to put her point of view across.

She loved Christmas and demanded to be the centre of attention, racing around the house with paper in her mouth, chasing the cats.

All of these dogs and many more have been a part of my life. I have loved them and lost them all. The pain is still there, like a dull ache; losing them was traumatic. They had all been part of my life and letting go of something you love is difficult.

Yet I embrace their memories because I know that if I could go back in time, I would not change any of my experiences with these wonderful animals. Yes, it hurt to let them go and sometimes I did wonder if the pain of losing them was worth it, but no matter how hard it was, I would rather have loved them and lost them than never had them at all.

Christmas is a special time. If you have your pets around you, then celebrate with them. Be grateful for every precious memory you make with them. Cuddle them, include them, love them.

If you have loved and lost your precious pets, rejoice in their memories. Relive your memories of Christmases gone by and be happy that you have shared your life with so many wonderful companions.

Merry Christmas, everyone – pets and all! ★

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The Association of Private Pet Cemeteries & Crematoria

The Association of Private Pet Cemeteries & Crematoria is the only organisation in the UK setting standards for the cremation and burial of pets. Its code of practice ensures that its members provide a genuine, personal and reliable service offering peace of mind to the bereaved

Obituaries

If you would like to pay tribute to your dog, send your obituary to Obituaries, Dogs Today, The Old Print House, 62 The High Street, Chobham, Surrey GU24 8AA enclosing an sae for the return of your photos. Donations gratefully received. If you would like a major tribute please write in for details.



For Clinton (born 27 August 1999)

We lost our precious boy on 28 July 2014 after nearly 15 years. He had a wonderful life and was a huge part of our family. He developed kidney disease early this year and became poorly only the week before he was put to sleep.

He will leave a huge gap in our lives; he had a big personality and was a fun dog to have around. Everyone that met him loved him, as he was a very gentle and sociable dog. He was featured in the *Golden Oldies* section in July this year and 27 August would have been his birthday. He can now run free!

Lots of love forever, Penny, Paul, Sarah and Lucy xx



Bob

Remembering our beautiful Bob. Bob, you were the most gentle Whippet. You gave to us 12 years of your love and filled each day with so much happiness. We will love you forever.

God bless your soul – be happy, Bob.

Alfred and Brenda xxxx



Lilly

Downland Orca

2 September 2000 to 8 August 2014

Where do I begin, my darling girl? I thought the hot weather was putting you off your food, making you reluctant to go for walks. You'd always loved your food and walks. It was when your tail had stopped wagging and you no longer gave me your amazing licky kisses that I knew in my heart something was not right.

A trip to the vet's went well: your loving heart was strong and all seemed OK. But over the next few days I knew you were so very unhappy; your sad eyes looked at me like they've never looked before. Another trip to the vet's and Scott just took one look at you, and, as he gently stroked you, said it was your time to go. It was like a knife through my heart.

I cradled you gently in my arms, telling you how much I love you, thanking you for all the love, joy, happiness and million great memories you've given me in our three years together. The angels called and you were gone. Waiting across Rainbow Bridge are Jack, Ben, Boris, Nikki, Billy, Barbie, George, Austin, Wolfie, Ali G, Brendan and Jake. You used to love digging holes in the back garden with Ali G. I hope you're both digging now in God's garden to your little hearts' content.

The very last time I looked upon your face, you looked so at peace. My grief and pain are still so raw; at the very mention of your name, I break down in tears. There's a huge void in our hearts, our home, our lives since you left. Rest in peace, run fast, run free, may your spirit forever walk beside me. Night, night little girl, till we meet again.

Love, hugs and a million kisses from your broken-hearted Mummy, brothers Murphy and Arthur, sisters Lizzie, Roma, Belle, and Ashley xxxxxxxxx

We will always remember our past babies, forever joined by our love.



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Vital statistics

Group:

This gundog is not recognised by the Kennel Club

Country of origin:

UK

Original function:

Dual-purpose gundog

Availability:

OK

Average life span:

12-14 years

Age at maturity:

Up to 2.5 years

Height:

Ranges from under 14 inches to more than 20 inches (35.5-51cm). The average female is 16 inches (40.5cm) and the average male is 17 inches (43cm)

Approximate weight:

From under 14kg (30lb) to more than 20kg (44lb); the average female is 14.7kg (32lb) and the average male is 16.7kg (36lb)

Coat

Coat type:

The coat is variable; some Sprockers have a fine, Springer-like coat, others a thicker, heavier Cocker/Field Spaniel coat, and others something in between

Colours:

Any spaniel colour or variant, but most Sprockers are black, black with a flash of white, chocolate or chocolate with a white flash, and there are roans

Does the coat mat?

It can tangle in the armpits and behind the ears

Coat care: A daily brush will remove the usual debris (twigs, grass seeds etc) and keep the coat in good order. Most have a spaniel cut, with the legs, chest, skirts and tummy trimmed, but anything goes!

Does the coat need professional grooming?

Only if you do not undertake it yourself

Special trimming for the show ring?

Not applicable

Lifestyle

Exercise:

A couple of good, off-lead walks a day would be appreciated by a healthy adult

Average food bill:

About £7 a week for an adult fed a complete diet

Ease of training:

A bright, eager pupil with the right motivation

Town or country dog?

Prefers the country life

Would he happily live in a flat or apartment?

Possibly, if his mental and physical needs were met

Will he live in a kennel if necessary?

Yes, but he prefers living with his humans in the family home

Does the breed suffer from the cold, wet or heat?

No

Temperament

Temperament with children:

Very good with respectful children

With dogs?

Very good

With cats?

Very good

Is the breed a natural guard dog?

Not at all

With strangers?

Friendly

Special considerations:

This dog loves to work – be it training for obedience, gundog work, or agility. He loves to use his mind, as well as his body

Character sketch:

Playful and friendly, the happy Sprocker makes a devoted family dog for the active family

Further Facts

Breed club: There is no official breed club, as the Sprocker doesn't have formal KC recognition. However, there are active groups of Sprocker fans, such as Recognise the Sprocker Spaniel, which is on Facebook, and the website www.sprockerspaniel.co.uk which has lots of information on this spaniel (including an e-book that can be bought and downloaded).

Rescue: Sprocker Assist is a Facebook group dedicated to rehoming any that are down on their luck, and most pedigree rescues for the Springer and Cocker usually assist, too.

First, a confession... I love spaniels and have shared most of my life with them, growing up with show Cocker and then owning Welsh and English Springers.

Let me explain how we came to share our lives with two Sprockers. The time was right to once again have canine company and my initial search was for a Welsh Springer, but they were few and far between, many miles away and commanded extraordinarily high prices.

During my search I found a litter of Sprockers in Kent and although I was aware of them, I knew very little about them and quickly discovered that there was little or no

information on the internet. Thankfully, that has now changed and prospective owners have access to much more information about Sprockers so that they can make an informed decision.

50/50 split

Having previously had Cocker and Springers, I was fully aware of their respective and individual characteristics and traits. Would, as some people suggested, a Sprocker be the worst of both breeds? Being an optimist and curious, I visited the breeder to meet a fantastic litter of 11 and met both parents.

Because the Sprocker is a mixed breed, I would always

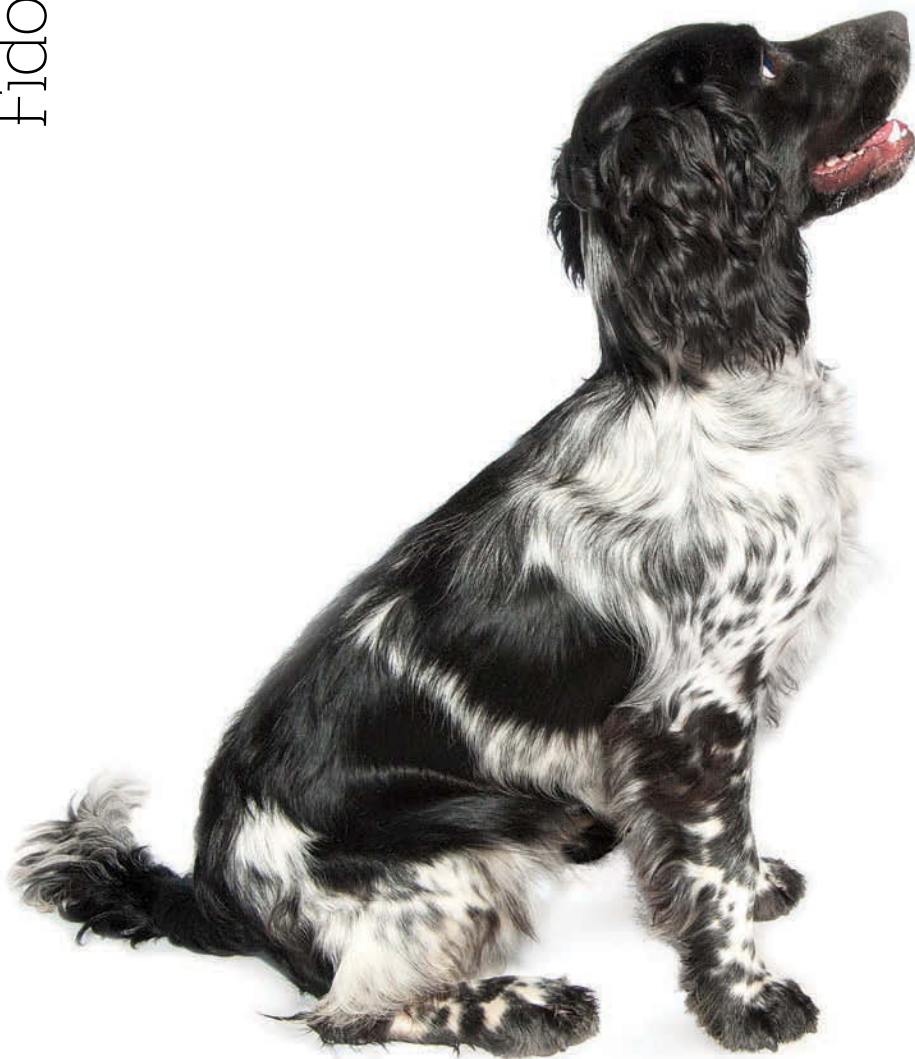
advise seeing both parents so that you can see their temperaments and characters for yourself. In this instance, Dad was a most handsome black Cocker, very sociable, confident and a little laid-back, while Mum was a working-type Springer, full of bounce and maybe just a little bit crazy... So here we might get a spaniel full of energy and ready to work but with a laid-back attitude at home?

Needless to say, we fell in love with a handsome little black Sprocker with a white flash on his chest. Alfie joined us at eight weeks, and, in the two years that have followed, he has proved what a fantastic combination of spaniels a Sprocker is for the active family or owner.

There is never a dull moment when living with Sprockers – you experience tears of laughter at their antics and 'little ways' and occasional tears of frustration when the famous spaniel ears fall off! A Sprocker is not for the faint-hearted; he is an energetic, intelligent, athletic dog who needs plenty of mental stimulation and challenges, not just physical exercise. However, a Sprocker that gets all of this can be a calm dog in the house, happy to snuggle up and settle down. He thrives on being an active and integral part of the family.

Busy bee

The Sprocker is the ideal companion for anyone who wants to 'do things' rather than just walk with their dog. They excel at organised activities, such as agility and flyball, and are always up for a challenge when out walking. My Sprockers get three or four 'work' sessions when we walk, which usually involves planting dummies and tennis balls for them to find and



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retrieve. We have five regular walking venues and they know the exact spots during each walk where the fun begins, and, as soon as we reach them, their faces light up and they get very animated. They love these sessions.

Dirty look

Sprockers are mud magnets who also love water, so house-proud owners beware! They will find stinky mud holes in the middle of a desert to wallow in, usually immediately after they have had a swim in a river to clean off!

Being spaniels and being so active, they inevitably suffer from sensitive stomachs from time to time, along with knocks, sprains,

muscle pulls and bruises. With this in mind, I feed my Sprockers the most natural diet possible, together with a supplement for joints, ligaments and tendons.

Sprockers are great with children as long as behaviour boundaries are established early on and everyone understands them – and even better if children are actively involved in training. For an active family and owner, the Sprocker is a rewarding, challenging and fulfilling companion – simply an absolute joy! ★

Words:
Matt Gardner

Photos:
**Bruce Elliott
Photography**
www.
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Fido Facts Sprocker Spaniel History



There are 11 kinds of spaniel recognised by the Kennel Club (excluding the Tibetan, which isn't a true spaniel) and there are a handful of others with international recognition. That's quite a number of spaniels to choose from if that's the type of dog you're after. But for some, none of the official spaniel breeds on offer is quite the ticket. Bring on the Sprocker, a cross between a Cocker and a Springer Spaniel.

Now, the Sprocker isn't really the same thing as many of the other crossbreeds that have proved so popular in recent times. The Cockerpoo

or the Cavapoo, for example, are crosses between two quite different types of dogs, whereas our Sprocker friend is a cross between two breeds that are already very similar.

In the mix

Although the word 'Sprocker' is a fairly recent coinage, the idea behind it is not new at all. In fact, this is how things have been done in the world of working spaniels for a very long time.

It's only relatively recently that all these different kinds of spaniels were regarded as separate breeds that should never be crossed for fear of

compromising breed purity. Spaniels have been around in this country since about the time of Elizabeth I, but the idea of pure breeds didn't come until much later.

'Spaniel' was a broad term, used to describe all shapes and sizes. If a distinction were made, it was according to function rather than breed. The smallest were known as comfort or carpet spaniels, and the working dogs were eventually divided into land and water spaniels. Regarding the Cocker and the Springer as entirely different creatures wouldn't have made much sense,

Words:
Justine Hankins



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certainly not to people who thought of their dogs as working companions with a job to do.

The words 'Springer' and 'Cocker' were first used around 1790 – although, according to one contemporary writer, you could use "whichever may please you, a matter of two names and not of two breeds".

The great divide
It wasn't until the 1800s that the fine-tuning of all these spaniel breeds began in earnest. In this period we find references to Cocker, Field, Springer, Sussex, Welsh, Devonshire and Norfolk Spaniels. Even so, no one would have been horrified about a bit of interspaniel mingling; indeed that's how all these different breeds came about in the first place.

So, although they weren't called Sprockers, there have been Springer-Cocker dogs around since long before everyone went crazy for the Labradoodle.

Interestingly, the first spaniel field trial took place in 1899 and it took until 1913 for the first English Springer Spaniel to gain the title of Field Trial Champion. This was a dog called Rivington Sam, bred and owned by Mr C A Philips, but what is more intriguing is that he was sired by a Springer known as Spot of Hagley, but out of the Cocker bitch Rivington Riband – so, in fact, the first Springer Field Trial Champion was actually a Sprocker!

The Sprocker's working prowess extends way beyond the field. West Midlands Police have bred their first ever litter of

Sprockers specifically for police search work. The breed scheme manager commented that Springers tend to be a bit 'gamey', meaning they like to chase and can be distracted, whereas Cockers are a little more responsive. The stated aim of the scheme is to create the ideal search dog by combining the two. They also said that Sprockers previously donated have all turned out to be efficient and excellent search dogs.

But it's as a family pet that the Sprocker really excels. Quite what you get in a Sprocker that you wouldn't get from either of the parents isn't entirely obvious, but dual heritage is very much a feature of the modern dog and there's no reason why spaniels shouldn't get in on the act. ★

1



2



3



4



5



- ① American Cocker Spaniel
- ② Cocker Spaniel
- ③ Field Spaniel
- ④ Springer Spaniel
- ⑤ Sussex Spaniel



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The Cocker Spaniel and the Springer Spaniel have had separate Kennel Club stud books for well over a hundred years. But before this, dogs in these two breeds were born from the same litters and differentiated solely on the basis of size.

Recent unpublished genetic analysis of these two breeds has shown that they remain very close, with around a third of Cockers genetically closer to most Springers than to other Cockers.

Both breeds have retained quite a lot of genetic diversity. Because of this, Sprockers, crosses of any Cocker Spaniel with any Springer, are blends of two breeds that are so close that the product of the cross can fit anywhere into the spectrum across the two breeds.



Words:
Dr David Sargan

In health terms, Sprockers may suffer the diseases common in either breed, but, like the parent breeds, most dogs have good general health. Most vets do not distinguish Sprockers from Cockers or Springers in their notes, so I have assumed that where a disease is common in both the parent breeds, it is likely to be present in Sprockers.

Skeletal conditions

Hip dysplasia, leading to lameness in old age, is a problem for some Springers and a few Cockers. So it is wise to choose a pup from hip-scored parents who are below the breed medians (currently 11 and 10).

Some Springers and Cockers can also show forelimb lameness as young adults, due to an elbow condition described as incomplete ossification of the humeral condyle. This may also cause fractures in a few dogs, and as it is present in both parent breeds, it is likely to be present in Sprockers, too. If your dog suffers from this condition in one foreleg, make sure that the other is also checked, because the developmental condition is usually bilateral.

Eye problems

A number of eye problems are seen in a proportion of both Cocker and Springer Spaniels. These include entropion and ectropion, the inward or outward rolling of the eyelids. Caused by excess skin around the eyes, the eye surface can be irritated by the eyelashes, or, by lack of protection, from external objects or by drying out. The latter phenomenon is associated with dry eye, in which tear production is inadequate; the surface of the eye becomes irritated and may produce excess mucus.

A further eye condition seen in a few dogs of both

breeds is primary glaucoma, an increase in pressure within the eye, which is often bilateral. It is painful for the dog and can rapidly lead to blindness. This is a developmental disorder, and a fairly reliable and simple test performed by a specialist veterinary ophthalmologist will allow you to know whether it is likely well before the disease develops.

Progressive retinal atrophy is a disease in which dogs of middle age slowly lose their eyesight because of defects in the light-sensitive structure at the back of the eye. It is also seen in both the Sprocker's spaniel ancestors. In this case, though, it is a rather rare disease, and likely to be even rarer in Sprockers, as at least one of the genetic causes known in Springers has not been seen in Cockers, and will not cause problems in first-generation crosses. But if you are considering breeding from your Sprocker, you should have it checked using the DNA tests that are available from the Animal Health Trust.

Ears and skin

Irritation and dermatitis in the ear (otitis externa or otitis media) is a common problem for Sprockers, as it is for all long-eared spaniels. If you notice your dog shaking or rubbing his ear, check for a discharge or for any signs of inflammation or bleeding in the ear. Treatment is often medical, but surgery can be needed in severe cases.

Skin problems, such as dermatitis and pyoderma, are also something of a problem for both Springer and Cocker Spaniels, especially in any skin folds.

Blood system

Immune-mediated haemolytic anaemia (IMHA) is a severe and potentially fatal problem in which the dog's own immune



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system attacks its red blood cells. Springer and Cocker Spaniels that have certain very common (but not universal) variants of immune system genes are more at risk of the disease. Many Sprockers will also have these variants. But the presence of these common variants is not sufficient to cause the disease, and it is suspected that there is a rare triggering event, such as exposure to a particular type of mild infection.

Onset is often rapid, with the dog showing lethargy, pale gums and membranes, lack of appetite and, often, pain. The attack on the red blood cells causes lack of oxygen in the tissues and may cause clotting within blood vessels. Treatment includes blood transfusion and medical treatments.

Neurological disorders
Epilepsy may cause twitching or full seizures. Although somewhat more common

in both breeds than in the general dog population (and so also likely to be seen in a few Sprockers), it is still a rare condition.

So-called 'rage syndrome' has also been reported in both breeds, and may be the result of interaction between an underlying neurological predisposition and poor socialisation. If buying a pup, avoid Sprockers from lines where this has been a problem, and always buy pups from reputable breeders only when you have seen them with their mother and discussed the methods used to socialise them.

Cancers

Both Cocker and Springer Spaniels have rather high rates of mammary cancer and of cancer of the anal sac glands. These are both most typically cancers of early old age and can often be treated successfully if caught early. ★

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We would like to include all charities - large and small - that have anything at all to do with the world of dogs. If you'd like to see your organisation featured in these pages, please call Mike McGlynn on 01276 858880 for more details. And if you've not yet got charity status but are still doing great work, have a chat with Mike - we may still be able to include you!

Featured charity



Blind Dog Rescue UK is dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation and rehoming of blind and partially sighted dogs in the UK and across Europe. It also offers help and support to owners of blind or partially sighted dogs.

The small registered charity is determined to ensure that blind dogs are given the chance to live full and happy lives, and has many wonderful blind dogs who act as ambassadors, inspiring their owners and everyone they meet. They are living proof that, whether born blind or having become blind later in life, these dogs, with support in a loving home, can develop the confidence and skills

necessary to become an integral part of the family.

Blind Dog Rescue UK helps dogs regardless of geographical location and has rescued dogs from Romania, Serbia, Cyprus, Spain and Russia. Its dedicated team of fosterers welcome the dogs and help to assess their medical needs and sociability. Home checks are carried out by volunteers nationwide, and free support and advice is given to all adopters.

Every penny raised goes to help dogs that would otherwise be euthanased or remain on the streets or in high-kill shelters. Blind Dog Rescue is frequently asked to help in emergency situations where dogs have very badly damaged eyes after being hit by a car. Several dogs have had both eyes removed following such accidents.

The charity constantly needs to raise funds to help dogs like these.



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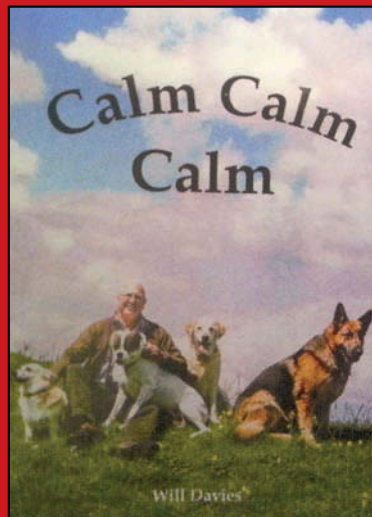
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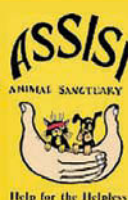
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Gyles Brandreth's Crossword

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Cryptic clues

Quick clues

Across

- 5 German Shepherds (9)
- 8 See 13 Across
- 9 Silky coated hound (6)
- 10 Shortened name for a Scottish sheepdog (7)
- 11 Bang feet in anger (5)
- 13 (And 8 Across) The kind of dogs that need little clipping (5,6)
- 15 Hounds such as Fred? (7)
- 18 Dog, for instance (6)
- 19 Attachment for Rover's lead (6)
- 20 Racing stadiums (3,6)

Down

- 1 Opposite to 'singular' (6)
- 2 Toddler's play area (4,3)
- 3 Last (5)
- 4 Noble of Arthur's round table (6)
- 6 Sausage dog (9)
- 7 One dog in 101? (9)
- 12 Garment worn when driving (3,4)
- 14 Rifle cleaner (6)
- 16 Persian Greyhound (6)
- 17 Disney dog (5)

Across

- 5 A learner sat with Scotman's guard dogs (9)
- 8 See 13 Across
- 9 Breed displaying nasty fang – ah! (6)
- 10 Crofter's dog comes from the isle (7)
- 11 Something from the post office for Terence (5)
- 13 (And 8 Across) Not the sort of dog a hippy would have? (5,6)
- 15 Male singer entertains group: The Low Hounds (7)
- 18 Beast could make a man ill, almost (6)
- 19 Nab something worn by your favourite pet (6)
- 20 You bet there are grounds for following Greyhounds here (3,6)

Down

- 1 More than one pull out when artist enters (6)
- 2 Youngster might dig this as a play area (4,3)
- 3 Some golf in Aldershot? It's an important match (5)
- 4 Title for a few hours, by the sound of it (6)
- 6 Dad's hunch turns out wrong – this is a German breed (9)
- 7 Dog from Adriatic coast is spotted all over (9)
- 12 Driver's habit (3,4)
- 14 Strict disciplinarian puts sheep on stick (6)
- 16 Dog for young Sally on United Kingdom island (6)
- 17 You'll need half of '1 Down' to supply this infernally animated dog? (5)

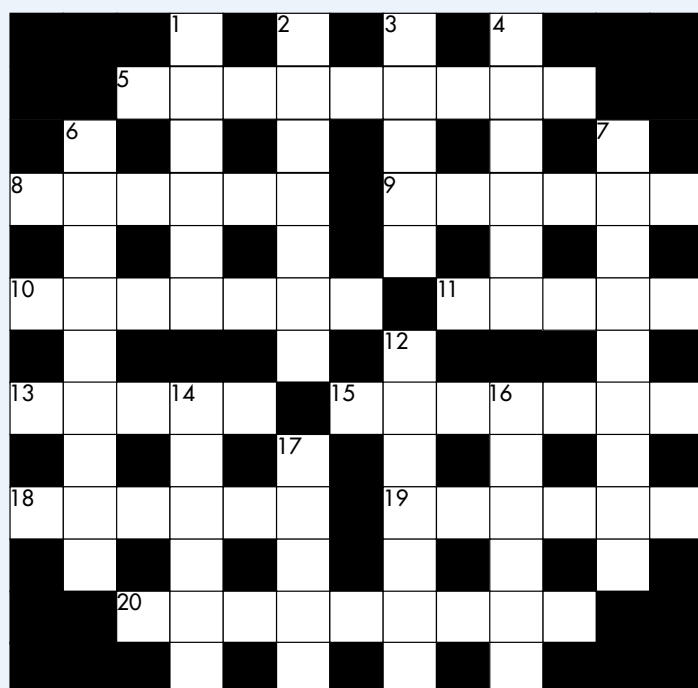
How to enter

Send your entry to arrive by 8 December 2014 to: December Crossword, Dogs Today, The Old Print House, 62 The High St, Chobham, Surrey GU24 8AA.

The first correct entries pulled out of the hat after the closing date will win the prizes. The judge's decision is final.

November solution

Across:
1 Babe; 3 Hovawart; 7 Relays; 8 Tied up; 9 Old Maid; 10 Otter; 12 Great Dane; 17 Pooch; 18 Belgian; 20 Slovak; 21 Animal; 22 Terriers; 23 Uses
Down:
1 Borzoi; 2 Bulldog; 3 Hospital; 4 Vets; 5 Wheaten; 6 Routed; 11 Edgeways; 13 Recover; 14 Enigmas; 15 Collie; 16 Ankles; 19 Skye



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